

## WINDSOR CASTLE

THE HOME OF THE ENGLISH KINGS FOR EIGHT HUNDRED YEARS

From a painting by George Lambert about 1760 By kind permission of Lord Farnhaven

THE  
KINGS OF ENGLAND  
1066—1901

BY THE  
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"THE PRIME MINISTERS OF BRITAIN, 1721-1924"  
"THE CHIEF MINISTERS OF ENGLAND, 920-1720"

WITH A FRONTISPIECE AND  
THIRTY-SIX PORTRAITS

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## PREFACE

THE aim of these pages is to give short accounts of the lives of the Kings of England with a sufficiency of incident from which to attempt an estimate of their characters and careers. If the same tale is sometimes told twice it is in order to complete a picture or to see it from another point of view.

Regal histories have been frequent in the past, and there is therefore not much that is new to say. The personal equation may seem to diminish in value as time goes on; but the part which the Kings have played is vivid; they have been a real factor in the making of England and they deserve an interest not always accorded them in modern studies of national progress.





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## NOTE ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

THERE is not a large choice of portraits of the early Kings of England and many of those here included are well known: all are believed to be contemporary or nearly so. It is debatable to what extent paintings anterior to the fourteenth century can be regarded as portraits. Expert opinion used to consider them as merely conventional, but the high skill in representation attained by early artists in metal or stone makes it improbable that their colleagues were less able in colour. That they attempted facial resemblance is shewn by the words of a writer in 1190, who speaks of beauty "the lineaments of which a painter working very hard could not exactly imitate." \*

\* Itin. Ric. Reg., 197.



# THE KINGS OF ENGLAND

1066—1901

## INTRODUCTION

MORE than a thousand years have elapsed since England first became a kingdom, a state ruled by one man. With the doubtful exceptions of the Byzantine Empire, which in the end dwindled to a single city, and of Scandinavia, the origins of which are nebulous, no past or present country in Europe has preserved so continuous a political system for so long a time. Through eleven centuries, covering more than one-third of the written history of the human race, fifty-eight sovereigns have worn the English crown, transmitting it in a succession of over thirty generations. The changing dispensation of modern days may accord respect to such an example of heredity and permanence.

Of the seven dynasties which have filled the English throne, the first, comprising twenty Saxon and Danish princes, ruled for two hundred and forty years. Beyond the meagre records of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle few contemporary documents of its days remain. Unknown, uncultured and unsung its Kings are little more than a series of names moving across a remote and shadowy past: *illacrimabiles urgentur*, and an attempt to examine or appraise their characters in detail would be vain. But with the advent of the Normans a more vivid breath blows across the land. The sleepy Saxon stirs, the bonds of torpor are burst, and a vigorous nation emerges from the limbo of the dark ages. Its progress as it expands is controlled, modified or portrayed by the personality



of the English Kings. Strenuous or supine, upright or evil, scheming or simple, they all play a real part in the evolution of their people.

The King of England has always been a definite figure in the comity of nations. At first the chief of a loose agglomeration of tribal principalities, he became in time the unchallenged ruler of his own land and then successively of Western France, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, North America, Hanover, India, Australasia, South Africa and of numerous colonies all over the globe. As the ages passed some of these dominions were lost, usually for the benefit of those that remained, but the Empire went on ever growing in size, strength and prosperity until it has become the largest, richest and most populous in the world. At its head still stands the English King.

Yet despite the antiquity of his office and the extent of his rule the King of England has never been in theory, and seldom in fact, an absolute monarch. Originally the elected prince of a royal family, a fiction which still survives in his presentation to the people at his coronation, he was in Saxon days largely controlled by his Witan. The Norman Kings had to defer to their powerful and unruly barons and to count the chances of revolt among their newly conquered subjects. The early Plantagenets were hampered by Continental possessions which called them constantly abroad and made them anxious to keep on good terms with their Great Council at home. In the thirteenth century the King was often busy fighting on the borders of Scotland or Wales, while Parliament which had now begun to function soon made him dependent on it for money. During the next two hundred years it grew so rapidly in strength, while he was still occupied in getting or losing lands in France, that in the fifteenth century it thrice decided the succession to the throne against the canons of heredity. At this time internal faction and overseas defeat had greatly diminished the royal prestige, wealth and importance: but after the Wars of the Roses many of the noble houses had disappeared, and a considerable number of Lancastrian

and Yorkist estates were then confiscated by the Crown. A strong personal ruler was needed, and for more than a century the King's power now increased, reaching its highest point at the Reformation, when the Tudors had become in effect though not in name almost autocrats. So matters stood until the coming of the Stuarts. Under them the royal prerogative was abused, attacked, overthrown, restored, abused again, and again curtailed, until after the Revolution of 1688 it was reduced to a shadow of its former strength. George III strove to resume a part of what his predecessors had lost and for some years he succeeded, but calamities in his own and other countries deprived him of his gains and by the nineteenth century the King had become what he now is, a constitutional prince who rules but does not govern.

At present the King is the chief check in the machinery of government, the accepted arbiter between different parties or classes, the central link of his dominions, the representative of the races he rules, and morally he stands in as high a place as he ever did in the past or as any monarch does to-day. The first in rank, the oldest in race, the richest in possessions in his empire, he is more concerned than any of his subjects in its well-being, for he exemplifies all, shares in all, and has the most to lose. The true embodiment of the past, present and future of his people, he typifies the essence of the state, and he has become the exponent of a constitution which is the political cynosure of the world.

Of the personal powers formerly enjoyed by the King little now remains. Of his own motion he can dissolve a Parliament, choose a Prime Minister or create peers, but he seldom does so. His influence, his experience and his detachment are more valuable assets than such privileges, and this his ministers and the public are the first to admit. His more formal attributes still continue and they have a genuine interest of their own drawn from religion, tradition and art. As an independent prince subject neither to Emperor nor Pope, the King of England wears a closed crown. His regalia of sceptres, swords, spurs,

tunic, cap and orb have each their separate history and meaning. His arms are among the earliest known, the lions of England being probably the heraldic coat of Aquitaine. His order of the Garter, the oldest and most prized in Europe, was planned in the twelfth and founded in the fourteenth century. His palaces of the Tower, Westminster and Windsor stand where they stood in Saxon, perhaps even in Roman, days. Nominally the head of Church and State, titular owner of all the land in England, in law he can do no wrong, he is barred by no limit of time and his office is not broken at his death. Raised high above temporal or party strife he thus enjoys a status that is almost sacrosanct, equally remote from envy, criticism or emulation. He stands apart, with little to wish or work for but the good and glory of his people.

"Princes" says Bacon "are like to heavenly bodies, which cause good or evil times, and which have much veneration but no rest: being at the highest they want matter of desire and so, many times, set their hearts upon toys." Two thousand years ago other philosophers thought much the same. "The King's heart is inscrutable: put not your trust in princes; their will is for the most part vehement and inconstant." In regarding the lives of the Kings of England these limitations, the natural difficulties to which they are born, have to be kept in mind. They fill a great place, they shoulder a heavy burden, and they often pay a penalty which though measured in full is not always so fully deserved.

# THE NORMANS

1066-1154

The Normans found England in a lethargy and isolated from the civilisation of Europe. The crown had just been seized by Harold, who was not the heir, not one of the Saxon royal family and, though powerful and popular, not the undivided choice of the nation. The land was a tempting bait, it had recently been held by the Danes, and it is probable that they would have taken it again had William the Conqueror not stepped in and done so.





WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

AT THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS WITH BISHOP ODO

From the Bayeux Tapestry

## WILLIAM I

1027-1087

WILLIAM I, styled successively the Bastard and the Conqueror, was born at Falaise in Normandy early in 1027. He was the only and natural son of Robert the Devil or the Magnificent, then aged about eighteen, who was brother and heir-presumptive to Richard III, reigning Duke of Normandy. His mother, Arlotta, daughter of Fulbert a local tanner, had caught Count Robert's fancy, it was said, when she was washing linen in a stream, and the Roman de Rou gives a curious account of the Conqueror's conception with appropriate legends of his future.

A few months after William's birth his uncle Richard died and his father succeeded to the duchy. But Robert's subsequent marriage to a sister of King Canute brought him no issue and when in 1034 he set off on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem he persuaded his barons, though with difficulty, to acknowledge William as his heir. On his way home Robert died, and at the age of eight William became Duke of Normandy, the fifth in descent and sixth in succession from Rollo the Viking founder of his house.

A hundred years had elapsed since a *savage* colony of pirate Danes had settled on the northern seaboard of France, wresting it from the weak hands of Charles the Simple. At first they had held only the lands round Rouen, but later on, when the Capets were ousting the degenerate descendants of Charlemagne from their throne, the Northmen's aid became of value, and their price was further fiefs. They gave the expanding hinterland their name, and by the beginning of the eleventh century the Norman duchy extended from the borders of Brittany to those of Flanders and from the English Channel to within



thirty miles of Paris. Its frontiers included the lower course of the Seine, the towns of Rouen, Bayeux and Caen, the harbours of Cherbourg, Honfleur and Havre, and its ruler had become one of the most potent princes in France for he could shut out his suzerain from the sea: yet his local power was limited, for much of his time was taken up in controlling his own subjects.

The Normans, though they had adopted the speech and religion of the Franks, had little sympathy with them, and their allegiance to their duke was of a casual nature. The eastern or older portion of the duchy was the more settled and, as a rule, the more loyal to its lord; but in the west paganism still prevailed, and there unruly hordes of Berserker barons "were well employed when merely rebelling against their prince or waging private war." \* There was no constitution or subinfeudation: the duke made the law and, when he could, enforced it; and on him alone depended the peace and prosperity of his people.

A child and a bastard succeeding to the rule of such a land in the dark ages had but poor prospects. Within his realm William had fewer friends than foes, beyond it the Counts of Anjou, Brittany, Flanders and Maine were fierce and contentious neighbours; while the King of France, alert and jealous, was ever on the watch to harry a too powerful vassal and resume his lost provinces. Such was the position of William at his father's death in 1035.

*Wit ans aveit Robert vesku  
Puis ke li sief tenu ;  
Grand duil out Willame sis filz,  
Ki encore ert asez petiz.  
Mult out hargnes, mes por amis,  
La plusurs truva mult eschis :  
La baruns s'entre guerreirent  
La forz li fiebles damagierent ;  
Non voldrent nient pur li lessier  
Ne il pout tuz justisier.†*

At first guardians were appointed for the young duke—his cousin Alan, Count of the Bretons, Osbern the

\* Freeman, William the Conqueror, 11.

† Roman de Rou, 8400 et seq.

Seneschal, and Gilbert, Count of Eu, while Turold was his keeper: but within a few years all of them were slain, Osbern as he lay sleeping in William's bedchamber. To them succeeded Ralph de Wacey, son of the Archbishop of Rouen, and he, though a rival and Gilbert's murderer, was faithful to his trust. But there was little peace. In words spoken fifty years later William said, "Since I was a boy, I have always worn my armour. Often was I secretly carried out of my room in the night from fear of my relatives, and was taken to the houses of poor people to protect me: and they stole nearly all I had." \* His protector on these occasions was usually his maternal uncle Walter, for his mother had now married a Norman squire, Herluin of Conteville, to whom she bore two sons, Odo, afterwards Bishop of Bayeux, and Robert, Count of Mortain. These boys were too young to be William's playmates, and his chief companion was his cousin Guy of Brionne, son of the Count of Burgundy. Another friend and cousin, though much older, was Edward, the future Confessor and King of England, who was living in exile at the Norman court during the reigns of Canute's two sons. Bred in Normandy, with a Norman mother, and drawn by sympathy and gratitude to his kinsmen and allies, Edward never ceased to love the Normans, and after he had succeeded to the English crown he strove to repay his debt.

In the year 1040 William made his first appearance in the field: he was already expert for his age in bodily exercises, strong, active and enduring—*bien creuz e granz*. † He was growing up short, stout and square, very muscular, a typical Norman, with a fierce expression and full of dignity. Of character he had need, for he was faced with many foes. His claim to the duchy had always been questioned because of his birth, and in 1047 a dangerous rival arose in the person of his cousin Guy. Allying himself with the western marcher lords and making a bid for the aid of King Henry of France, Guy organised a widespread revolt. His first move was an attempt to

\* Ordericus Vitalis, 656-7.

† Roman de Rou, 8744.

seize William at Valognes: but warned by his fool "who came at dawn tapping on the door of his bedchamber," William slipped out of the castle half-clad, mounted a horse and fled to Falaise.

*En braies ert et en chemise  
Une chape a sun col mise.\**

Collecting a few loyal friends he rode on to Poissey and invoked the help of his overlord the French King. For Henry it was politic to support authority, so French troops joined the Norman forces which William rapidly assembled. At Val es Dunes the young duke showed himself a bold and skilful leader and broke the strength of his enemies. So completely were they defeated that William was able to be lenient. The rebel lords were heavily fined and their castles razed, but Guy himself was allowed to return to Burgundy. This was the first step in William's career. It established him firmly at home and spread his fame abroad. A period of quiet encouraged him to carry his name and arms beyond his own dominions, and to his contemporaries he soon became a champion of chivalry:—"France had not another such knight: to see him reining in his horse, shining with sword, helmet and shield and brandishing his lance, was a pleasant yet terrible sight." † In an expedition with the French King against Anjou he again distinguished himself, obtaining as a reward the fortresses of Domfront and Alençon on the border of Maine. In this campaign he shewed the ruthlessness which became one of his characteristics. At Alençon the townsmen had jeered at him from the walls, beating hides and crying "*La pel, la pel al parmentier.*" William swore "*par la resplendor Dé*" that they should pay for their words, and when he took the town thirty-two of them had their hands and feet cut off.

He now took control of the duchy himself and by sound government gradually raised it to a high position in Europe. It was an age of adventure, and the Italian exploits of

\* Roman de Rou., 8826 et seq.

† Wm. of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, 179.

his countryman Robert Guiscard must have fired his imagination and his ambitions.

In 1051, at the age of twenty-four, William paid his famous visit to England.\* It was during the exile of Earl Godwin, the mighty mayor of the palace, when Edward the Confessor, released for a moment from his rule, had eagerly called in his former friends. He was childless and had just put away his wife, Godwin's daughter; his nearest heir was an unknown wanderer in Hungary; while William, though not of Saxon blood, was a close connection and a capable neighbour. At that time England was isolated in thought and affairs from the Continent, under the sway of a few great territorial magnates; the Norman lords and priests whom Edward had already imported were only too ready to welcome their illustrious duke; and though William's stay was short it was fateful, for it was then, if ever, that Edward promised him the English crown. On his departure, with many presents of "*chiens et oisels*," William left behind him a Norman Primate and a Norman Bishop of London, valuable allies with a pious prince like Edward. But in a few months all was changed: the Godwins were back in England more powerful than before, the Norman nobles and prelates had fled abroad, and Edward was again under tutelage of the English. William however had seen a country, had received a pledge and formed a hope which he was not to forget.

He now made the second step in his career. For some years he had wished to marry Matilda, daughter of Count Baldwin V of Flanders. It was a great alliance, for besides being *mult bel e gente* the lady was related to the chief princes of Christendom. Her father ruled the Netherlands, her uncle was King of France, and she was descended both from the Emperor Charlemagne and King Alfred of England—an important asset to a candidate for the English throne. William loved her and coveted the

\* "Then soon came William the Earl from beyond the sea with a great band of Frenchmen; and the King received him and as many of his companions as it pleased him; and let him away again." Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 108.

connection, though the Church opposed the alliance on the ground of consanguinity. But he went on with his wooing and embellished it with romance. Matilda had refused to wed a bastard ; so William, it is said, rode to her father's palace, threw her down and beat her, until she said he was just the man she liked. Determination won, and in 1053 the marriage was celebrated, Lanfranc, the Italian Prior of Bec and one of the subtlest brains in Europe, being sent to Rome to get the business legalised. It took six years to settle, and the price of the Papal consent was the building of the two churches at Caen which bear their founders' names.

Meanwhile Normandy was still gaining in strength, and though internal revolts and French raids went on, William grew ever more powerful. At the battle of Varaville he defeated the allied troops of France and Anjou, again enhancing his reputation as a soldier. In civil affairs his system was enlightened, for to learning and commerce he paid an attention that was rare. His two half-brothers he advanced in Church and State, but Lanfranc remained his chief counsellor, and most of his appointments were made for merit. In 1060 the deaths of Henry of France and Geoffrey of Anjou freed him from a double danger, and he then added Maine to his duchy and became undoubtedly the greatest man in France. But in England his prospects had not improved. Edward was now schooled to a national policy, and the influence of Godwin's son Harold was paramount. To this William was well alive ; and in 1064 chance came to his aid. Harold had been driven by a storm on to the Norman coast and was at once claimed by William as his prisoner. While in William's power it is said that Harold did him homage, swearing fealty upon some holy relics and promising to marry his daughter :—the English and Norman chroniclers give very different accounts of what really occurred. But when Harold returned to England he had left a dangerous weapon behind him.

In January 1066 King Edward died childless. The Witan chose Harold to succeed him :—he was Edward's

brother-in-law, Canute's cousin and already the territorial ruler of half the country. The news came to William at Rouen as he was going hunting.

*Un Serjant*

*Ki d'Engleterre vint errant*

*Al Duc vint dreit · el sahua*

*A une part li cunseille*

*Ke li Reis Ewart ert finez*

*E Heraut ert a Rei levez.\**

The song tells how "the duke spoke no word and no man spoke to him. He laced and unlaced his cloak several times, then relinquished his hunting, crossed the river to his palace and sat in his hall, leaning his head on a pillar and covering his face with his cloak."\* His seneschal Fitzosbern, one of his closest friends, urged him to act and at once,

*Se boen courage ne vos faut*

*Ne remandra terre a Heraut.\**

William took the advice: perhaps his plans were prepared. It was not half a century since Canute, another Dane, had invaded and subdued England; and quite recently the Norman d'Hautevilles had seized Apulia. A bigger prize now lay before William. He had a potent ally in his father-in-law Count Baldwin, an active rival in the King of Norway, and there was no time to lose. A message was sent to Harold accusing him of perjury, bidding him resign his kingdom or hold it of William, and recalling his promise to marry William's daughter. Harold replied that his crown came from the Witan and the English people, that his oath had been given in duress, and that he was already married. William then appealed to the Pope and the princes of Christendom, whose political creed regarded a crown as a personal possession and not as a national trust. Harold was charged with treason and sacrilege, with exiling the English Primate and with being uncanonically crowned. At Rome the Norman envoys offered a wider rule for the Church, while to those

\* Roman de Rou, 10991 et seq.

who joined the duke's cause they promised plunder and preferment. Pope Alexander's chief adviser was Hildebrand, the future Gregory VII; he approved the principle of appeals to the Holy See; and William was blessed, sent a sacred banner and sped on his crusade.

German, French, Flemish and Italian adventurers now joined his forces, and during the spring 12,000 men were assembled on the coast and equipped with ships, horses and munitions. The Norman barons had at first refused their support, but at a great meeting at Lillebonne Lanfranc induced them to join in the venture which thus became a national movement. By Easter Harold knew that the Duke of Normandy "would come hither and win the land," and he also made his preparations. An army, "larger than England had ever seen" was kept on foot up to the summer, while the navy was so much increased that when Tostig, Harold's exiled brother, raided the east coast, he was easily driven off. But at harvest time the English dispersed to their homes, and Tostig, with the King of Norway's son, then descended suddenly on Yorkshire. Harold however got together sufficient forces to defeat them completely at Stamford Bridge where both the invading princes were slain.

Hitherto the Normans had been immobilised by the weather, but now, when his most dangerous rival had just been beaten, William got a favourable wind. He quickly transported his troops across the Channel, sailing himself in the *Mora*, a ship given him by his wife; and landing near Pevensey, he advanced a few miles inland to the present Battle Abbey. Harold received the news at York and instantly posted south with his house-carles "the finest mounted infantry in Europe."\* Collecting levies on the way he met the invaders on October 14th a little north of Hastings.

The tale of the battle is well known. William's army was in three divisions—Normans in the centre, Bretons and Flemings on the flanks. The English, drawn up in squares on a hill slope, at first had the advantage, but

\* Trevelyan, 116.

late in the day a feigned flight by William's cavalry induced them to pursue, and they were then severely harassed by his archers. By evening the Norman knights had got up to the Saxon standard where William killed Gyrth, one of Harold's brothers; and soon afterwards Harold himself was struck down by an arrow. His death brought about a rout, and William encamped on the field. Tactics, numbers and *moral* had all been on his side, for axe and sword had little chance against mailed troopers and trained bowmen. Throughout the fight he had displayed his usual courage and leadership, and when his barons saw the dints on his armour they compared him to the ancient paladins.

After seizing the Cinque Ports and securing his communications with Normandy William moved to Canterbury, where he was detained by a month's illness. There he received the submission of Winchester. As London still held out he crossed the Thames by Wallingford, and at Berkhamstead he was met by Edgar the Etheling, the child-heir to the throne, Archbishop Aldred of York, Edwin and Morcar, the two northern earls, and the chief men of London. At their request he accepted the kingdom and on Christmas Day 1066 he was crowned at Westminster by Aldred—Stigand, the Saxon Primate, assisting. The ceremony was marred by a massacre of citizens whose cheers were taken by the Norman soldiers for an insurrection. William dealt severely with his own men, but he disliked risks, so he at once began to build and fortify the Tower of London and Baynard's Castle.

Within six months he held all the south-eastern counties and he soon shewed his administrative genius. Taking up the position of a lawful sovereign, both as Edward's kinsman and the elected of the Witan, he assumed by a legal fiction the possession of all the lands in England. A portion he regranted, on payment of heavy fines, to Saxons who had not fought against him, while he rewarded his own followers from the domains of his opponents. Replacing English thanes and prelates by Norman knights and clerks he rapidly filled the south



country with a network of loyal garrisons established under a modified feudal system.

At Easter he went back to Normandy taking with him as hostages Edgar, Stigand, Edwin and Morcar, and leaving Odo and Fitzosbern as Regents. On his arrival in Rouen, where Matilda had remained in control, he was greeted as the Conqueror of the age, a title that Rome and Europe readily allowed him. In the following winter he returned to England and bought off an attack organised by the King of Denmark. For some years he was then engaged in crushing risings all over the country. This was the real conquest of England. In 1068 he took Exeter where Harold's sons had led a revolt: in 1069 he subdued Durham and York, laying waste the country wholesale; in 1070 he ravaged Cheshire; in 1071 he reduced Ely and the fen country; and in 1072 he pacified the Scottish border. On one expedition his provisions gave out and his men had to eat their horses, but William, marching on foot and sharing their food, forced his way over hills thick with snowdrifts, working with his own hands to clear the roads.\* Fines, taxes and confiscation followed each campaign, and Norman castles soon covered the land. Every year more estates were given to foreigners until great Saxon landowners ceased to exist. Stigand was deposed and succeeded by Lanfranc, and by the end of the reign only one English bishop was left.

But in his civil government William adhered to English custom and law. Matilda was brought over and crowned in England, and there she gave birth to her fourth son, the future Henry I. The King held his three annual councils at Westminster, Winchester and Gloucester, as his predecessors had done: he renewed the borough rights, though at a heavy price, and all transfers of land were made on similar terms. To facilitate his finance he introduced the Jews into England, bringing them over from Rouen, and gradually he became rich enough to carry on the administration of the kingdom from his own resources, though he did not hesitate to levy taxes as well. He

\* Green, i. 18.

broke up the large English earldoms but retained the sheriffs and the shire courts, and he strictly limited the new tenure by chivalry so that the rights of the Crown always benefited as compared with those of its vassals. National amalgamation he favoured, taking English troops to Normandy to fight against Anjou, and when his own Norman Earl of Norfolk revolted he did not scruple to enlist Danish help against him. In this rebellion Waltheof, the last Saxon earl, was put to death—the only instance, it is said, in which William inflicted a capital sentence for a political offence.

In ecclesiastical matters also he took a strictly national line. He separated the lay and spiritual courts, attacked simony and enforced the celibacy of the clergy, but he insisted on appointing his own prelates, allowed no legates from Rome and refused to do homage to the Pope.

Within ten years of the conquest England was comparatively settled. The King of Scots had sworn allegiance and the west had been subdued. But on the Continent troubles had begun. Baldwin was dead, and the new Count of Flanders was unfriendly to William; Philip of France pursued the anti-Norman policy of his family; and in the duchy itself William's eldest son Robert was claiming the actual rule, with which he had been nominally invested. "The King refused this and drove away the youth by the blustering of his terrific voice, laughing and saying,—By the resurrection of God this little Robin Curthose will be a clever fellow. I am not used to strip before I go to bed."\* But Robert had a party of his own and in 1079 he forced his father to attack him. In a fight near Gerberoi the King was unhorsed and wounded by his son, an indignity he never forgave, and though the quarrel was composed in a fashion, for the rest of his reign William was distracted from his work in England. Domestic feuds soured his temper. Imposts were multiplied and more lands were seized, among them the vast tract called the New Forest which was set apart for

\* Wm. of Malmesbury, *Hist. of the Kings*, 389; Simeon of Durham, 209.

the King's own hunting and placed under specially severe laws. This confiscation was widely resented, and the deaths of two of William's sons within the forest were held to be a retribution.

In 1083 died Queen Matilda "perhaps the only person William ever cared for." She had been a real force in his life, for her character was a complement to his: her loss was an equal blow to Normandy and England. William however was still full of vigour and two years later, when a Danish invasion threatened, he brought from France "so great an army of riding men and marching men as had never sought this land before." \* On their arrival the invasion instantly collapsed.

William's last work was the Domesday survey. In this the whole of England was mapped out, the acreage and produce scheduled, the revenues assessed and the names of the landowners set down. For seven months commissioners rode through the country recording every detail "so that not a hide nor a yard of land, nor an ox, nor a cow, nor a swine was not set in his list." \* When it was completed an immense assembly of the tenants-in-chief did him homage on Salisbury Plain—an epitome of the order and organisation he had established in a reign of twenty years.

He was now sixty and his age was beginning to shew. In the summer of 1087 he went to Rouen to reduce his corpulence by a course of medicine. Philip of France remarked that "the fat man was long lying-in," and when this was reported to William he swore to "do his churching in Paris and burn many candles."

*Quant jo, dist il, releverai  
Dendenz sa terre a messe irai,  
Riche offrande li porterai  
Mille chandeles li offerrai.†*

A dispute about frontiers had begun, and William left his bed to take and burn Mantes. In riding through the streets his horse reared, and its saddle struck his heavy

\* Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 131.

† Roman de Rou, 14200.

stomach. It caused a fatal injury, and for three weeks he lay dying at the Priory of St. Gervais. During this time he kept all his faculties and carefully arranged his affairs. He disposed of his money and lands, leaving legacies to the Church, his attendants and the poor. The prisoners of state he released, including, at the request of the clergy, his brother Odo, whom he had imprisoned for oppression. To his two elder sons he bequeathed his dominions, to Robert Normandy "though he will rule it ill," to William England "if it may be arranged." To his youngest son Henry he gave five thousand pounds in silver, saying that he would get all his brothers' inheritance in time. In his last words he described his own race as "strong, unconquerable, excellent in overcoming difficulties if firmly ruled—but otherwise tearing each other to pieces." \* On September 9th 1087 he died and was buried shortly afterwards in his own splendid church at Caen. Five hundred years later the Huguenots destroyed his tomb, and in the eighteenth century the Revolutionists dispersed his bones. He was succeeded in Normandy by Robert, in England by William Rufus, and within a few years, as he had predicted, by Henry in both countries. Of his six daughters one married Count Alan of Brittany and a second Count Stephen of Blois; the others died young or entered the Church.

Beyond the conventional images on coins, seals and tapestry there are no authentic portraits of the Conqueror. William of Malmesbury describes him as "of moderate stature, extraordinary corpulence and fierce countenance, his forehead bare of hair. He was of such great strength of arm that no one was able to draw his bow which he himself could bend when his horse was at full gallop. He was majestic, whether sitting or standing, although the protuberance of his belly deformed the dignity of his appearance; of excellent health, observant of chastity in his early youth, insomuch that it was commonly reported that he was impotent. He was humble to the servants of God, affable to the obedient,

\* Ordericus Vitalis, 656.

inexorable to the rebellious. He was daily present at mass and heard vespers and mattins. He gave sumptuous and splendid entertainments at the principal festivals; and during the whole of his life he was so fortunate that foreign nations feared nothing so much as his name.\* The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle calls him "a very wise man, very powerful and dignified, a true monarch and stronger than any of his ancestors, gentle to those good men who love God and beyond all measure stern to those who opposed his own will. He loved the tall deer as if he were their father."†

Of scholarship William had little: he could read but could not write, and though in later life he tried to learn English "his age made the task too difficult."‡ His vernacular was Norman French, an example of which has been preserved by Ingulph in a clause of the laws relating to sanctuary:—*Co est a saveir, pais a saint yglise: de quel forfait que home out fait en cel tens: e il pout venir a sainte yglise; out pais de vie et de membre.*§ William's days were so packed with affairs that he had little time for study, indulgence or luxury. Hunting was his only pastime, though for the subtleties of the law he had some affection: when Bishop Odo pleaded his episcopal immunity against imprisonment the King replied "You are one of my earls."

William's character had marched with his career. A bastard and an orphan, surrounded by open and secret foes, he had to fend for himself from the first. Wise beyond his years he early taught himself to excel in battle and leadership, in statecraft and government. Patience, valour and restraint brought with them success, and as his foes fell away his ambition grew; baseborn though he was he would be as great a duke as had been in Normandy, worthy of the line from which he sprang. His English enterprise and the responsibilities which it brought

\* Wm. of Malmesbury, 258, 267, 273, 279.

† Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 134.

‡ Michelet, i. 555.

§ Selden, Op. om., ii. 640.

widened his mighty mind, and he rapidly rose to the heights of fame which history accords him.

Few great men have had so few faults. His avarice for money was more for the state than himself; like Cromwell he could be cruel, though for sufficient reason; but he was the protector of all his people, and even the Saxons said that he made "good peace in the land." His virtues were many. He was moral, God-fearing, just, firm and brave. To peaceable folk and often to his enemies he was forbearing. In great matters he was immensely patient, anxious to choose his subordinates from the best material, always their loyal supporter for good service done. In his foreign and Church policy he was no doubt guided by Lanfranc, but his control of the domestic affairs of England and Normandy was his own, and though at times he employed regents he never devolved his work on ministers. For his English subjects he had a real concern; he gave them a government better than they had ever had before and he laid the foundations of their later character.

Cool, resolute and daring, schooled by adversity, a past master of men, William the Conqueror was the best and most brilliant prince of his age. The pirate blood of his ancestors had fitted him for action, while his own experience and the example of his French neighbours had taught him economy and order. His genius, compact of sagacity and forethought, free from all meanness, able alike to conceive and execute the boldest plans, retrieved from stagnation the country he had conquered and launched her on her own career of conquest.

## WILLIAM II

c. 1060-1100

WILLIAM II, called Rufus from his ruddy complexion, was born, probably at Rouen, about 1060. He was the third son of William the Conqueror, then Duke of Normandy, and of his wife Matilda of Flanders. Of his early years little is known. He was sent to the Abbey of Bec where Lanfranc of Pavia, the future Archbishop of Canterbury, had established a school which had become famous throughout northern France : but as Lanfranc was soon translated to England, while Queen Matilda was acting as Regent in Normandy, there was not much insistence on William's education. Perhaps in consequence his mind became entirely devoted to sport and military exercises, and in later life he could hardly read a letter.\*

As a youth he was knighted by Lanfranc and he is first definitely heard of about 1077 when his eldest brother Robert was beginning to quarrel with their father. At the time of the conquest of England Robert, then a boy, had been invested with the duchy of Normandy, though the gift was only nominal, for at no time in his life did the Conqueror allow his sons any real part in the government of his dominions. But as he grew older Robert craved for more power and began to intrigue ; his mother, who favoured him, giving him some countenance and money. In the disputes which followed Richard, the second son, and William Rufus sided with their father ; and when in 1079 the King came over to Normandy to besiege a castle held by Robert, the younger William was wounded in a skirmish, a chance which endeared him to his father.

\* Wm. of Malmesbury, 258, 305.



*William .*

WILLIAM II

From a fresco formerly at Rouen Cathedral





At this time he was leading the usual life of a Norman lord, fighting, hunting, and amusing himself more or less licentiously with his boon companions. He was fair-haired, short and stout, very strong like his father, easily angered and fierce in manner.

In 1081 Richard, the Conqueror's most promising son, was killed by a stag in the New Forest; and two years later Queen Matilda died. The differences between the King and Robert had increased; Henry, the youngest boy, was only fifteen; so William Rufus who was constantly at his father's court saw a chance of the succession. The Conqueror took the same view and on his deathbed he made his intentions plain. Saying that William had always been a dutiful son, he gave him the English regalia and sent him off to London with a letter to Lanfranc recommending him for the crown.

William lost no time. Taking with him two important Saxon hostages, Wulnoth, Harold's brother and Earl Morcar, he crossed the Channel. On landing he made straight for Winchester, seized the royal treasure and then rode on to Westminster. At first Lanfranc hesitated to promote his candidature; but Robert, who had been a constant trouble, was away in France, while William was Lanfranc's former pupil and had active friends among the Norman barons in England. So the archbishop agreed to crown him, making him promise at the ceremony to be guided by his advice. William was about twenty-seven; he had not hitherto occupied any responsible position and his whole interests lay in what was then styled chivalry. He had collected round him a band of desperadoes whose chief claim to distinction was their disdain of danger or restraint. These he now formed into a court of warriors who flattered his ideas and stimulated his desires. To them alone he was generous and with them he passed his days in wild adventures. "*Cil roy d'Angleterre estoit chevalier merueilleux aux armes et sur tous hommes convoiteux et desirant d'acquerrre los et renommée.*"\*

Rufus indeed only respected soldiers: for the clergy he

\* Grandes Chroniques de St. Denis, iii 208.

had little feeling but contempt, for the rest of his people hardly any feeling at all. He wished to be the most famous knight in Christendom and by the standards of his day he possibly succeeded.

*Li Reis Ros fu de grant noblesce  
Proz fu e de grant largesce  
N'oist de chevalier parler  
Ke de proesc oist louer,  
Ki en son brief cscrit ne fust  
E ki par an del suen n'eust.\**

Almost at once he had to deal with rebellion. His uncle, Bishop Odo, had been for some years in custody as a punishment for his misgovernment when Regent; but Rufus restored him to the earldom of Kent and made him Justiciar, the highest post in the land. Within a year the bishop was in league with those Normans who wished to place Robert, their new duke, on the English throne. An insurrection planned with care broke out simultaneously in Sussex, Kent, Somerset, Worcester, Norfolk and Durham, while an army led by Robert landed on the south coast. In such a crisis William was at his best. He had on his side Lanfranc and the prelates as well as his English subjects. Summoning the national fyrd he enlisted the support of the Londoners by a promised remission of the taxes and of the feudal laws. Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester, a tower of strength, he left to deal with the western rising, while he ignored for the moment that in the north. Marching south with Lanfranc and the main body of his troops, he drove back Robert's army, reduced Tonbridge, Pevensey and Rochester, beat the rebel barons, and shipped Odo off to his see of Bayeux amid the execrations of the English. The western and northern revolts collapsed; Rufus seized his opponents' lands, and at the very outset of his reign he thus found himself supreme.

For a short space all looked well, but in 1089 Lanfranc

\* Roman de Rou, 14490 et seq.

died and the loss of his influence soon made itself felt. War and pleasure immensely increased the royal expenditure; taxes of every sort were levied to meet it; while all the pledges of economy were discarded, "For who," said William "can fulfil all his promises." \* His countrymen had just taken Sicily, and his ambitions expanded. He must get back Normandy; he must emulate his father; he must be the most powerful prince alive. Flambar, a Norman priest without breeding, learning or morals, though an expert at raising funds, was made chief minister, and in such company William's character sank. But he stuck to his project of reuniting Normandy and England. This, if he was to be safe in either country, was a political necessity, and to achieve it he had only an easy foe to beat. After bribing some of Robert's nobles he crossed with an English force to Eu and by threats succeeded in securing half the duchy. To indemnify himself Robert, who had pledged the Cotentin to his brother Henry, then allied himself with William to recover it, and the unfortunate Henry thus found himself deprived of both money and lands.

In this campaign while besieging Mont St. Michel, William performed one of his typical deeds of daring. He had bought a new horse and was exercising it along the sands when he saw a party of the enemy. At once and alone he rode at them and after a short encounter he was unhorsed and dragged along by the stirrup. The knight who had struck him down was on the point of despatching him when William called out "Hold, rascal I am the King of England." At this his opponents instantly released him, gave him a fresh mount and let him ride away. Looking round William asked who had overthrown him, and on the knight who had done so admitting his exploit, William said "By the Face at Lucca you shall be mine: your name shall be written in my book and you shall receive the reward of good service." † This was the Red King's chivalrous side.

The Scots now invaded England, and though William

\* Eadmer, 14.

† Freeman, Wm. Rufus, i. 288.

lost little time in returning and marching against them, some checks at the outset discouraged him and he was soon content to make peace. Within a year however he disavowed the treaty, and in a fresh campaign the Scottish King was killed and William again reaped a success.

But in England he had other difficulties to meet. Since Lanfranc's death the primacy had remained vacant, for William, though pressed by bishops and barons to fill it, preferred to keep its income for himself. When Anselm, the Abbot of Bec, was recommended to him as "a man of such sanctity that he loved nothing but God," William said "What, not even the archbishopric of Canterbury? I swear by the Holy Face of Lucca that neither he nor anyone else, except myself, shall be archbishop." \* Soon afterwards, as a result of his riotous life, William fell seriously ill at Gloucester where he remained bedridden for two months. The priests seized the moment for approaching him "and during this time he vowed many good promises rightly to direct his own life, to give peace and protection to the churches . . . and to have righteous laws for his people." † He was even persuaded to make Anselm archbishop, though much against the latter's will. But by Easter he was well again; and then the promises were forgotten, the bad counsellors recalled and the old ways resumed.

In 1094 a fresh dispute with Robert led to another invasion of Normandy, and more taxes were levied in England to provide the necessary bribes and troops: little however was gained. A year later William attacked Wales and penetrated to Snowdon; "but the Welshmen always went before him into the mountains and moors so that no man might get at them." ‡ By now such popularity as the King had ever enjoyed was totally gone. Feared by the people whom he plundered, hated by the clergy whom he reviled, he was already fighting the new archbishop whose influence counted for much. The break with Anselm marked the final stages of William's career.

\* Eadmer, 16.

† Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 139.

‡ *Ibid.*, 141.

There came one more chance of seizing Normandy. The luckless Robert had determined to go to the crusade and to get funds he pawned his duchy to William for 10,000 marks. The money was soon raised in England and at last William seemed to have realised his hopes. His brother Henry, whom he had now taken under his wing, seconded his efforts, and a strong rule was established in the duchy. But his new possession only fired William to greater efforts, and a fresh expedition into Wales brought him further losses and expense. On his return to England he renewed his quarrel with the archbishop who after many protests at last left the kingdom. 'Now,' said William, 'I shall have some liberty.'

In 1098 Count Elias of Maine raided the Norman frontier. William crossed the Channel and took him prisoner. Elias, knowing William's foibles about chivalry, dared him to release an enemy whom he feared. The bait caught and the count was given his freedom. But hardly was William back in England when a fresh revolt began. The news was brought him when hunting in the New Forest. In a fury he rode to Southampton and though a storm was raging and he had neither troops nor transports ready, he boarded a fishing boat and ordered its owner to set sail. In vain his courtiers urged the danger; he answered that he had never heard of a king perishing by shipwreck; "Weigh anchor at once and you shall see the elements conspire to obey me."\* He arrived safely, and at the terror of his name Elias fled from the land.

Whitsuntide of the year 1100 William spent at Westminster where his new dining-hall was almost finished: he called it "a mere bedchamber to what he would build." "Here he gave the bishopric of Durham to Flambard whom he had appointed extortioner over the whole kingdom." He had now devised a scheme for subduing Ireland and Aquitaine, and for this an army and a fleet were to be assembled in the summer. When one of his courtiers asked where he would spend Christmas, William said "In Poitiers."

\* Wm. of Malmesbury, 320.

At the beginning of August he was hunting with his brother Henry in his favourite New Forest. On the evening of August 1st a monk came to him and bade him beware of the morrow, recounting a dream he had had. "He is a monk" said the King, "and like a monk he dreams for money—give him a hundred shillings." Yet he slept ill all that night. In the morning came an English peasant with a present of arrows. William was pleased and gave them laughing to Tirel, one of his friends, saying "It is right that you should have the sharpest, you can fire deadly shots"—a play on Tirel's name.\* The party set out. In Malwood glade William was left alone with Tirel; a stag passed; the King shot and missed; "*Tire toi, de par le diable*" he cried. Soon afterwards he was found slain, though whether by design or misadventure or by whom none ever knew. Tirel fled overseas, and Henry seized the crown. The King's body was laid on a cart and carried to Winchester where little honour was paid it. Unwept, unshriven and unsung, under a black marble slab without name or inscription, William was laid to rest. He was aged forty, had reigned thirteen years and had never married, the only adult King of England who did not do so.

William Rufus was a well-set man "of open countenance with different-coloured eyes; of astounding strength, though not very tall, and his belly rather projecting; of no eloquence, but remarkable for a hesitation of speech especially when angry."† He had an assumed severity and a ferocious look in public, but at home this was changed for levity and railing at anything he had done amiss, to make it a matter of jest.

Of morals he had few—"troops of pathics and droves of harlots followed his court," and it is possible that the vices of which he is accused may explain his dislike of marriage.‡ Honour, in his mind, existed only among knights—for others any treatment sufficed, and where they were concerned justice, decency or faith were not

\* Ordericus Vitalis, 782. † Wm. of Malmesbury, 321.

‡ Freeman, Wm. Rufus, i. 157 etc.

expected. But in feudal matters he held strictly to his word, in battle he was fearless, in his own land he kept peace, and though "harsh and hard to men of religion he was very courteous to the laity." \* In energy and ambition he rivalled his father but in ability or judgment he lagged far behind: the will was there but not the wit. The elder William had been his own minister though he had had good servants. His successor despised such aids and committed his interests to worthless favourites whose only object was to enrich their patron and themselves;—"in their time law was silenced and money ruled supreme." † By robbery, oppression and contempt he had set the Church against him, and at his death he held in his own hands the sees of Canterbury, Winchester and Salisbury, with twelve of the greater abbeys. Such a policy did not endear him to those who wrote history.

Of William's personal habits there are many tales. "He was a man," says Malmesbury, "who knew not how to judge of the value of goods: the trader might sell him his commodity at whatever rate or the soldier demand any pay he pleased. He was anxious that his clothes should be extravagant, and angry if they were purchased at a low price. One morning when putting on some new boots he asked his chamberlain what they had cost and on hearing three shillings, he cried out in a rage 'You son of a whore, how long has the King worn boots of so paltry a price? Go, get me a pair worth a mark of silver.' The chamberlain went and bringing him a much cheaper pair told him falsely that they had cost as much as he had ordered. 'Aye,' said the King, 'these are suitable to regal majesty.'" ‡

A Jew once came and offered to pay him sixty marks if he would make his son, who had lately become a Christian, revert to his former faith. William agreed, sent for the boy and ordered him 'By the Face at Lucca' to recant his Christianity. The lad declined, and the Jew, desperate, refused to pay. William however said

\* Wm. of Malmesbury, 314. † Florence of Worcester, 322.

‡ Wm. of Malmesbury, 313.



that he had earned at any rate something, and took from him thirty marks.\*

Yet passionate and unscrupulous as he was William was not devoid of genius. His ideas, vague in design, weak in execution, had something grandiose about them. "His greatness of soul," says Malmesbury, "was obscured by excessive severity and the world doubted for long to which side he would incline: but at last the desire after good grew cold—for he feared God but little and man not at all."† God, he said, would never consider him good because of all the evil he had done. So he hardened his heart and let the demon drive him.

With little education, training or experience, William admired and revered his father and to the best of his ability tried to copy him. He had no Lanfranc as a guide, no duchy as a support, no wife as a restraint, yet his vision in the main was clear. Degraded and vicious in his life and his religion, his mind was adroit, his decision prompt, his action brave and vigorous. He saw the need of Normandy, he realised the strength of England, so he never ceased striving to unite them, tolerating no enemy on their borders, and aspiring to an empire beyond. The fearless, godless and reckless knight of romance, the conscious slave of glory and passion, determined to defy, astound and excel all the world, his career strikes a certain note of pathos: in different circumstances he might have been a hero, for the quality was there. In an age of mighty edifices he built Westminster Hall. That monument and a name for courage, lust and tyranny were his most lasting legacies to England.

\* Eadmer, 47; Wm. of Malmesbury, 317.

† *Ibid.*, 312.





HENRY I  
From his Great Seal

## HENRY I

1068-1135

HENRY I, called Beauclerk from his scholarship, was born late in 1068, probably at Selby in Yorkshire. He was the fourth and youngest son of William the Conqueror by his wife, Matilda of Flanders, and the first child born to them after the conquest of England. This made his position in English eyes superior to that of his brothers, for not only was he born an Etheling, the son of a crowned King and Queen, but he was born in England. To the value of this distinction his parents were well alive, and William had him educated entirely in this country. He thus received a very different upbringing from that of his elder brothers, being continually under the supervision of Archbishop Lanfranc. He is mentioned as spending his holidays at a monastery and he became a good Latin scholar—*litteratus rex epistolas legit* \*—and speaking English as well as French.

While still a lad Henry had experience of family quarrels. On one occasion when the court was at Laigle, where Robert as acting Duke of Normandy was affecting a state almost equal to his father's, his younger brothers threw some dirty water on him from an upper room where they were playing dice. Robert came raging upstairs threatening to kill them and made such a clamour that the King himself had to intervene.† It was a foretaste of the fratricidal fights which were to last a lifetime.

At eighteen Henry was knighted at Westminster, the archbishop arming him. He was short, dark and thick-set,

\* Ordericus Vitalis, 812.

† *Lis oritur demonica inter filios Regis. Ibid.*, 545.

healthy and physically strong like all his race but quieter in manner than his brothers. In 1087 he was with his dying father at Rouen, and while the King was distributing his dominions Henry tearfully asked what his share was to be. "I give you five thousand pounds in silver from the treasury," said William. "But what shall I do with money if I have not a place to live in?" asked Henry. "Be calm, my son" replied the King, "and trust in God. Let your elder brothers peacefully precede you. Robert will have Normandy and William England, but you in your own time will have all that honour which I have obtained and you will excel your brothers both in riches and power."

The Conqueror died, and Henry hurried off with his money which he carefully weighed and secured: \* he then attended his father's funeral, the only one of the brothers to do so. Almost at once a borrower appeared for his fortune. Robert, the new Duke of Normandy, a great fighter and talker but vague, extravagant and lazy, always wanted cash, and his young brother seemed an easy prey. Henry at first demurred, but on being offered the rule of the Cotentin with Avranches and Mont St. Michel—nearly a third of the duchy—he lent Robert £3,000. Land was what he needed, and he at once devoted himself to the government of his possessions. In the following year he went over to England to get seisin of his mother's estates: William Rufus allowed it but on his brother's departure at once gave the manors to others.

On Henry's return to Normandy Robert seized him and imprisoned him for six months at Bayeux, alleging that he had been conspiring with William. The Norman nobles however obtained his release, and Henry went back to the Cotentin where he continued his careful control, making friends with the local lords and strengthening the defences of the towns. His mettle was soon tested. In 1090 the citizens of Rouen, bribed by William, revolted against their duke. Henry sided with his eldest brother who was his suzerain, and on the latter's flight took

\* Ordericus Vitalis, 639.

command of his men, led them down from the castle into the city and beat the rebels, taking Conan, their leader, a prisoner. Bringing him up to the top of the castle tower, Henry thrust him out through a window, despite his prayers for mercy, saying "By my mother's soul there is no mercy for a traitor."\*

Duke Robert shewed little gratitude for this exploit and soon agreed with William to divide Henry's lands. For a fortnight Henry stood a siege in Mont St. Michel; but his brothers were too strong for him and they controlled the water-supply. At last he begged them for some wine, which Robert sent him.

*Henris tint li Munt fierement ;  
Ne sai dire com lungement.  
De viande aveient plente,  
Maiz de bevre aveient grant cherte.  
Quant Henris out lunges soffert,  
Soef manda al Duc Robert,  
E Robert l'en a envie,  
Ne sai se il en out pitie,  
Un tonel plein de vin, mult tost,  
Del meillor k'il trova en l'ost.†*

Such a style of warfare was entirely against the advice of William. "Where" said the soft-hearted duke, "shall we get another brother?" "Is that how you make war?" answered the King. Eventually Henry had to surrender, though he was allowed the honours of war. But the alliance of his brothers had been a catastrophe for him and for some months he now wandered about Normandy attended only by a knight, Roger his clerk and three grooms. Later on he went to England and joined William in his Scottish expedition: then, returning to Normandy, he received an offer from the town of Domfront to come and govern it. There he established himself and during the next eight years he extended his influence and gradually recovered part of the Cotentin, where the countryside was glad to get him back. He was now in constant opposition to Robert, and his help was of value

\* Ordericus Vitalis, 690.

† Roman de Rou, 14698 et seq.

to William. In 1094 he was invited to London, and when Robert pawned the duchy to William the latter enlarged Henry's powers in Normandy and made him his lieutenant.

The summer of 1100 found Henry staying with William at Winchester, and on the morning of August 2nd they went out together hunting. A legend says that Henry halted to mend his bowstring at a cottage and that there a wise woman told him he would soon be King. During the day William met his death, though none knew how. Henry, who is said to have been in another part of the forest when he got the news, rode post-haste to Winchester and demanded the keys of the royal hoard. De Breteuil, the Treasurer, refused to give them up, saying that Duke Robert was the rightful heir, but Henry laid his hand on his sword and the few barons present took his part. Early next morning the semblance of a Witan elected him King: during the night he posted to Westminster and there, one archbishop being abroad and the other dying, he made the Bishop of London crown him. It is a strange tale.

As on a previous occasion the luckless Robert was again off the scene, this time getting married in Sicily. Henry was conscious of the weakness of his claim, so to clinch matters he issued a proclamation promising redress of wrongs and the renewal of King Edward's laws. He supplemented this by a series of politic acts. "The manners of the court were reformed, the minions were dismissed and the palace was lighted at night:" Flambard, the Justiciar, was sent to the Tower, Archbishop Anselm was recalled from exile, and the best of the Normans were placed in office, Roger, Henry's chaplain, being made Chancellor. Henry then arranged to marry Edith, a daughter of the King of Scots and a granddaughter of Edmund Ironside. This union, by restoring the old Saxon blood, did much to reconcile the English to the new dynasty though the Normans eyed it askance and called the King and his wife Godric and Godgifu. Henry was thought to sympathise with the English, while the Queen, who now changed her name to Matilda, was

small and insignificant.\* The barons' real objection to Henry was his strength of character: they much preferred his brother's free and easy ways.

Robert's return to Normandy was the signal for trouble. Flambard escaped from the Tower, crossed the Channel and urged him to fight for his inheritance. The discontented barons lent him their aid, and in 1101 he landed at Portsmouth and marched on London. But Henry was forewarned. He called out the English fyrd, assembled the Normans he could trust and approached the waverers with bribes. When the two hosts met near Alton, Robert, though stronger in numbers, was persuaded to treat. Henry agreed to relinquish his Norman possessions except Domfront and promised Robert a pension of 3,000 marks and his aid to recover Maine. Elated at this success Robert went back to Normandy and within a year gave up his pension at the request of his godchild Queen Matilda. Once he was gone Henry dealt sternly with his enemies, and gradually all who had opposed him were disinherited or fined. The most powerful and the last to suffer were the Bellesmes: Henry drove them to their castles in Wales, suborned their allies and seized their lands so that they had to flee abroad. By 1103 his position was secure, and thenceforward he steadily continued reducing the power and possessions of the Norman barons in England; until by the end of his reign he had almost eliminated the chief families, replacing them by men of a lower order whom he promoted for their services. By an equally pertinacious use of finance and force he made himself in time master of Normandy and fortified its frontier against the French.

For his assaults on the duchy Henry had sufficient excuse, for Robert, gay, eloquent and brave, was a hopeless ruler. "None could be a more pleasant companion, in other men's affairs none could counsel better"† but a total incapacity for business made him a facile prey to friends and foes. Flambard and Robert of Bellesme soon

\* *Despicabilis formæ*, Wm. of Malmesbury, 393.

† *Ibid.*, 389.



let him give Henry his chance. After various remonstrances on the lack of order in Normandy and the damage done to his own subjects there, Henry took an army across the Channel in 1105. At mass on Easter Day he had his hair cut short as a protest against the effeminacy of his brother's court. Then in a short and vigorous campaign he reduced half the country. Robert tried to make peace, but Henry gained more ground until at the battle of Tenchebrai, forty years after Hastings, the English troops revenged their old defeat. The day was decided by the treacherous flight of the Bellesmes: Duke Robert was taken prisoner, and all Normandy fell into Henry's hands. Henry kept his brother in open confinement in England until the latter's death twenty-eight years later, while Robert of Bellesme he also imprisoned for life. The many adulterine castles which had been erected in the duchy were razed, law and order were restored and a definite system of taxation and government was established.

Once at peace in Normandy Henry began the English reforms on which his fame rests. A concordat was made as regards the papal investiture of prelates, Henry agreeing to a compromise by which the Crown chose and the Church invested them. Roger, the Chancellor, now Bishop of Salisbury, was promoted to be Justiciar, and for the rest of the reign he was chief minister. Under his guidance the *Curia Regis* was divided into a court of justice and a board of exchequer, and it gradually superseded the Witan. Regular records were started, itinerant judges were appointed, taxes were apportioned and the foundations of a civil administration were laid.

For many years Henry had to carry on a desultory war on the Norman border, for Robert's son, William Clito, remained a centre of opposition which Louis of France and Fulk of Anjou were glad to exploit. On one occasion Louis challenged Henry to settle the points at issue by single combat; but this Henry declined and in course of time by money and management he bested his opponents. His rights over Maine and Brittany were

acknowledged by Louis ; his son was betrothed to Fulk's daughter ; and his paramount position in the duchy was recognised by both princes. Wales he pacified by occasional raids and by introducing colonies of Flemings, while with Scotland he had little trouble though three of his brothers-in-law in turn filled its throne.

The Queen had only borne Henry two children, a son William, who gave little promise, and a daughter named Maud or Matilda. In 1110 the latter was sent to Germany to marry the Emperor Henry V. She was only six years old at her coronation so "the Archbishop of Treves reverently held her in his arms" ; \* and after the ceremony she was taken back to the nursery to learn German.

In 1117 the Queen died. A quiet woman, mainly occupied with religion and charity, she had never been an influence in her husband's life, and he had consoled himself with mistresses. Their numerous progeny was by no means a blessing to him. Once while conducting a campaign against some Norman rebels he had to attack a castle belonging to the husband of one of his natural daughters ; and during the siege an arrow from the walls nearly killed him. In revenge he completely blockaded the tower where the lady had taken refuge until he forced her to jump down and wade across the ditch half naked—*de sublime ruit et nudis natibus in profundum fossati cum ignominia descendit.* †

In 1120 Prince William was married to Fulk of Anjou's daughter. This alliance allowed Henry to concentrate on fighting France. At the skirmish of Brenneville, where only three knights were killed out of nine hundred, he was twice severely wounded, being hit on the helmet so that the blood gushed from his nostrils ; but he put Louis to flight and captured the French standard. After peace had been made he returned to England. He was followed from Barfleur by Prince William with many of the young nobles. The ship's crew had been drinking and during the night it ran on some rocks and sank, all on board being drowned

\* Wm. of Jumieges, 297.

† Ordericus Vitalis, 349.

except a Rouen butcher. When the news was brought to Henry he fell senseless to the ground and never, it was said, smiled again. To his policy as well as his affection the blow was severe, for his nearest male heir was now his brother Robert. To remedy this he married Adela, daughter of Godfrey of Louvain; but their union was barren, and the question of his successor remained a constant menace.

Fulk of Anjou had now betrothed his daughter to Clito and he again stirred up rebellion in Normandy. But Henry crushed it with his old vigour, inflicting severe punishments on the prisoners. Among them was Luke de Barré, a fighting troubadour who had written roundels against him. Henry sentenced him to be blinded; and to avoid this penalty the unfortunate poet dashed out his brains against his prison walls.

For a time Henry now favoured Stephen of Blois, a son of his sister Adela: he was popular, handsome and gallant and a possible heir to the English throne. But in 1125 the Emperor died. His wife Matilda, Henry's daughter, had had no children, but she was only twenty-one, and though she had spent her life in Germany her Saxon blood was an asset in England. Henry, disappointed of male issue, determined to make her his heir; and at the next Christmas court he compelled his nobles to receive her as their futuro sovereign. The scheme led to a resumption of the war with France, for it was felt that Henry was behaving unjustly to his nephew William Clito. To counter this Henry renewed the Angevin alliance by betrothing Matilda to Fulk's son Geoffrey, a lad of fifteen; and when a year later Clito died, his dynasty seemed secure. But Matilda's marriage was unhappy; and though she had a son, afterwards Henry II, the Norman nobles were bitterly opposed to the prospect of being ruled by the Angevins, their hereditary foes. Her father however insisted on his plan and enforced a fresh oath of allegiance to Matilda and her infant child.

In the summer of 1135 Henry went to Rouen. During

some months he had been ailing, for the discovery of a plot to murder him had made him nervous and had affected his health. He now received news of one insurrection in Wales and of another on the Norman border, led by his son-in-law Geoffrey. For this he blamed his daughter, and as a consequence she went off to Angers leaving Henry deeply hurt. Coming in one evening from hunting he ate heavily of lampreys, a dish which his doctors had forbidden. It brought on a fever, and after a week's illness he died on December 1st, 1135, having lived sixty-seven and reigned thirty-five years. His body was taken to Rouen, where its stench killed the embalmer ("the last of his victories" says the chronicler), and was then brought over to England and buried in the abbey of Reading which he had founded. He left only one child born in wedlock, the Empress Matilda, but his illegitimate issue comprised six sons and seven daughters,\* of whom Robert, Earl of Gloucester, Richard, Earl of Cornwall, Matilda, Countess of Brittany, and Sibylla, Queen of Scotland, were the most distinguished. His widow Queen Adela subsequently married William de Albini by whom she became the ancestress of two other English Queens, Anne Boleyn and Katherine Howard.

Henry I was a man of middle stature, "his hair black, his eyes mildly bright, his chest brawny, his body fleshy: plain in his diet, never eating except when hungry, never drinking but to allay thirst; his sleep heavy and interrupted by frequent snoring. His eloquence was not rapid but deliberate: he was facetious in proper season, not pugnacious, and he preferred contending by counsel rather than by the sword. By learning he trained his early years to the hope of the kingdom and often in his father's hearing made use of the proverb that 'an illiterate king is a crowned ass.' He neither read much nor openly, nor displayed his attainments except sparingly, yet his learning though obtained by snatches assisted him in the science of govern-

\* According to Wm. of Jumieges. Miss Strickland exalts this figure to twenty, while Wm. of Malmesbury calls Henry 'a hero as regards the domestic vice of Kings.'

ment and how to restrain the people with lenity." \* Hunting was his favourite pastime and he never admitted any diminution of the forest laws: at Woodstock he had a park containing camels, lions, lynxes and a porcupine.

Walter Map, a contemporary, praises Henry's methodical arrangement of his day, his court and his journeys. "In the morning he talked with wise old men and did business; after luncheon and sleep, with younger folk and on less serious matters. The names of all the earls and barons were written down. Thrice a year he sent clothes to the King of France and to many of his nobles, and any young men who distinguished themselves abroad received money from him. When the court moved there was a regular itinerary for markets fixed beforehand, so that the countryfolk might be sure of bringing provisions at the right time and place, while fixed allowances of candles, bread and wine were made to the household." †

This is a picture of a careful, meticulous man who did nothing improvidently or in haste. But other traits in Henry's character are less attractive. Secret in counsel and seldom shewing his feelings, he never relinquished his purpose and rarely forgot or forgave. Malmesbury calls him "a most severe requiter of injuries, constant in enmity or affection" and Robert Bloet says "I never knew him praise a man whom he did not intend to ruin." ‡ In later life he was easily angered, and he was always inflexible in justice. Offences against the state or individuals he punished by blinding or castration: in one year out of fifty coiners only four escaped these depressing penalties. As a consequence the Saxon Chronicle records that the land was so safe in his time that "who-soever bore as his burthen gold and silver no man durst say to him ought but good. He was a good man and great awe there was of him. Peace he made for man and beast." § With some reason Henry was thus called

\* Wm. of Malmesbury, 390, 400, 411, 412.

† W. Map, *De Nugis*, 210, 225.

‡ *Lingard*, ii. 52.

§ Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 164.

the Lion of Justice. He was also a sound financier, giving lavishly on occasion but always saving money : he left £100,000 in the treasury, a vast sum for those days.

"He was abstinent from war as far as he could with honour" though warfare was a part of his daily life. In battle he was always a leader and was often wounded ; but naturally he was not a man of blood. "God give him the peace he loved"—said one of his bishops : in a long life he had learnt its benefits.

Of Henry's morals there are various accounts. With women he was passionate and unrestrained, though one chronicler, after calling him *pater patriae*, says that "he was wholly free from impure desires, for he partook of female blandishments not for the gratification of incontinency, but for the sake of issue ; nor condescended to carnal intercourse except where it might produce that effect ; in this respect the master of his natural inclinations not the passive slave of lust."\* This description tallies with Henry's practical ideas. To the Church he was not ungenerous, though he did not scruple to keep the see of Canterbury vacant for five years and to annex its revenues. He founded the monasteries of Chichester and Dunstable and the abbey of Reading, rebuilt many chapels and generally lived at peace with his clergy.

A sound organiser and a clear-headed ruler, orderly and patient like his father, ambitious like Rufus and agreeable like Robert, Henry I combined the best characteristics of his family. The education and discipline of his youth had given him judgment : he had seen the value of economy and of good counsellors, he understood the arts of diplomacy and he profited from the example of his predecessors. With few friends when he came to the throne he succeeded by careful policy in securing English loyalty, enlisting the support of Rome and coercing or seducing the Norman nobles. He designed or approved a basis of public finance and justice, and ensured their administration by recruiting a new class of officials who depended on his favour only and served him far better

\* Wm. of Malmesbury, 390-412.

than his rapacious barons. Endowed with a broad mind, and realising the needs of a national system, he first linked the local and central government together and strove to weld Normans and English into one people by providing for their common comfort, their common prosperity and their common civilisation.







STEPHEN

From his Great Seal

## STEPHEN

c. 1101-1154

STEPHEN was born, probably in 1101, at Chartres, the third son of Stephen, Count of Blois, by Adela, fourth daughter of William the Conqueror. At the time of his birth his father was at the First Crusade in Palestine where he was shortly afterwards killed. The Countess Adela then selected her second son Theobald for the succession but continued herself to act as Regent. A woman of character, beauty and beneficence, known as *l'amie des pauvres*, a classical scholar, a poet, a patron of learning, a friend of princes and prelates, she shewed remarkable ability in government. She rebuilt the cathedral of Chartres, she entertained such different guests as Pascal II, Bohemond of Antioch and Archbishop Anselm, and she was so famous as a peacemaker that the disputes of Europe were constantly referred to her. In 1109 she made over the rule of Blois to Theobald, and five years later she sent Stephen, still a boy, to England, where his uncle King Henry had promised to promote him.\* Henry educated him with his own son, knighted him, and gave him the counties of Mortain and Alençon in Normandy as well as considerable estates in England. He also made Stephen's younger brother Henry, Abbot of Glastonbury and subsequently Bishop of Winchester.

As a friend of his cousin William, the young Stephen narrowly escaped death in the *White Ship*. A sudden indisposition, tempered perhaps with discretion, prevented him from embarking. Orderic remarks that he went on board but seeing the state of the crew and passengers,

\* Wm. of Newburgh, i. 29.

left the ship, saying that she was overcrowded with gay and headstrong people.\* After William's death Henry kept Stephen constantly at his court and in 1124 married him to Matilda, heiress of Eustace, Count of Boulogne, by Mary daughter of the King of Scots, a sister of Henry's own Queen. She had been educated in England and had succeeded to her father's lands and wealth, so that Stephen became one of the richest lords in England. He was a tall and handsome man, blue eyed and fair haired, brave, eloquent and generous. With his consort he resided at Tower Royal (*Tour de la Roule*) in the city where they were extremely popular. It is possible that for a time Henry contemplated Stephen's succeeding him on the throne, but in 1125 the death of his son-in-law, the Emperor, changed his plans. Henry sent for his daughter, the Empress Matilda, and on her arrival formally recognised her as his heiress. At a Great Council held for that purpose Stephen was the first baron to swear fealty to her.

The Empress Matilda was a young woman and the widow of a man many years her senior. It is said that she now fell in love with her cousin Stephen, a not unlikely tale. But her father had other views and married her to Geoffrey of Anjou, a lad of fifteen, and as unsatisfactory a mate as her previous husband. Stephen meanwhile remained one of the chief men at Henry's court. He was employed on various missions abroad and in 1132 he again led the barons in taking the oath of allegiance to the Empress and her infant son, "though all the French and the English disliked this, but the King did it to have peace with the Earl of Anjou." †

In November 1135 King Henry died at Rouen. Stephen by his command of Boulogne and the Channel was able to get quickly to London where his position and prospects were strong. His mother was the last living child of William the Conqueror, he and his wife were the nephew and niece of the late King and Queen, and he was the only man of royal blood in England where he had been educated

\* Strickland, ii. 202.

† Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 1127.

and held large estates. It is true that he had sworn fealty to Matilda, but she had been long absent from England, she was married to an Angevin, and her son was an infant in arms; while neither English nor Salic law had yet admitted a woman to the throne. These facts perhaps might be held to absolve him from his oath.

Stephen wasted no time. "While the Empress, her brother, Robert of Gloucester, and almost all the nobility delayed returning to the kingdom" \* he crossed over with a small retinue and posted to London. His arrival was the signal for a general movement, the whole city pouring out to meet him with shouts of joy.† His brother the Bishop of Winchester, a man of vigour and decision, had prepared the way by approaching the great officers of state. Roger of Salisbury, the Justiciar, the Primate, the Treasurer and the Norman barons did not want an Angevin dynasty; and Stephen who was good tempered, weak and ambitious was persuaded to forswear himself. It was put about that the dying Henry had disinherited his daughter; at a small council chiefly composed of prelates, officials and aldermen, Stephen was chosen King. On December 20th 1135 he was crowned at Westminster.

Matilda, away in Anjou and tied to the sickbed of her husband, had meantime proclaimed herself Lady of England; while Theobald of Blois, Stephen's elder brother, had been offered the crown by some of the Normans. But the news of Stephen's coronation checked them. Theobald resigned his claims and in support of his brother enlisted the help of France: Matilda, though protesting energetically, could not take any action: Robert of Gloucester did Stephen homage for his English lands; and an embassy sent by the new King to Rome secured the Pope's sanction to his succession.

To attain his ends Stephen had been compelled to make many promises. London was given an additional charter; the Church recovered her rights as to the election

\* Wm. of Malmesbury, *History of His Own Times*, i. 11.

† *Gesta Stephani*, 44.

of bishops; the King of Scots received the earldoms of Carlisle and Cumberland; Danegeld was abolished; the forests were thrown open; and the nobles were allowed a wide licence for building castles. For the moment Stephen's prospects looked serene: "he made a splendid progress through the country and was well received everywhere, for he granted the requests made to him."

But risings soon began. Stephen had fallen ill at Oxford, and on a report of his death Hugh Bigod rose in Norfolk and Baldwin de Redvers in Devon. Stephen crushed them both and then went over to Normandy where he had now been acknowledged. There however he found his position hazardous, for Geoffrey of Anjou threatened him. An invasion by the King of Scots brought him back to England, and on landing he had to march on Bath and Bristol where Robert of Gloucester was in revolt. In the north the royal cause was upheld by Thurstan, the old Archbishop of York, who assembled the northern barons and led them to victory. At the battle of the Standard, fought on August 22nd 1138, the Scots were totally defeated; and through the good offices of his wife Stephen made a satisfactory peace. He then turned to meet Robert of Gloucester. This earl, the most capable and wealthy of King Henry's natural sons, had taken his sister's side. His influence in the west of England was strong, and Stephen knew him for a dangerous foe. He also suspected him to be in league with Bishop Roger who though no longer Justiciar still controlled the government; for his son and nephew, the Bishops of Ely and Lincoln, were respectively Chancellor and Treasurer. Stephen had kept on good terms with Roger rather than lose his services; he used to say "By the birth of God, I would give him half England if he asked for it: till the time be ripe he shall tire of asking ere I tire of giving."\* Elated by his Scottish success and urged by his friends he now determined to get rid of the whole family. At a council at Oxford the three bishops were ordered to give up the keys of their castles. On their refusal

\* Wm. of Malmesbury, *History of His Own Times*, 401.

Stephen arrested Roger and his son and carried them in his train to Devizes, one of their strongholds. There, by threatening to starve and hang his two prisoners, he got possession of the fortress and subsequently of those of Malmesbury and Sherborne, and he then began to harry Roger's nephew, the Bishop of Lincoln. But his own brother, the Bishop of Winchester, now came on the scene. He had coveted the see of Canterbury which Stephen had given elsewhere, and he had been allowed, as a consolation, to become Papal Legate. This office placed him above all the prelates in the kingdom and he soon shewed his power. Summoning a Church Council at Winchester he cited the King to appear and answer for his treatment of the three bishops. As Stephen refused, judgment was given against him; and though nothing further was done the indignity damaged his position. Almost at once the Empress Matilda landed in England and established herself at Arundel. Stephen, a stickler for chivalry, was persuaded by his brother to let her join Robert at Gloucester; and a civil war then began which lasted for the remainder of his reign.

The King's influence now declined; he had to hold his Whitsuntide court in the Tower instead of at Westminster, and only one bishop attended it. In the field he was indefatigable, reducing the Bishop of Ely in the Fens, Hugh Bigod at Bungay, and Robert of Gloucester in Cornwall; until early in 1141, while he was besieging Lincoln, the whole of Robert's Welsh and Norman forces converged upon him. Stephen saw that he was outnumbered, but fear was not among his faults. With scanty and inferior troops he gave battle and held out for the whole day; but his enemies were too strong and his own troops gradually deserted. The struggle centred round him and he fought "with the fury of a wild boar" dealing tremendous blows with a London battle-axe and when that was broken using his great two-handed sword. At last he was hit on the head by a stone and beaten down. He refused to surrender to any but Robert of Gloucester, exclaiming that "his ignominy was a punish-

ment for his offences and was the vengeance of God.”\* Robert treated him well and took him to Gloucester, and the Empress then sent him to Bristol. At first he received consideration, but as on several occasions “he was found at night beyond the bounds assigned” he was eventually confined in the castle and put in fetters.

Matilda’s party being thus in the ascendant the Bishop of Winchester joined her. Calling another Church Council he deposed Stephen, received the Empress at Winchester, presented her with the regalia and proclaimed her Lady of England. But when she arrived in London, Stephen’s stronghold, she was not so welcome, and she made many mistakes.† She did not rise when the King of Scots came to her on bended knee: she thundered at the citizens and disgusted them with her “intolerable female pride”: she enforced huge fines, and when they begged for relief, “with stern eye and knitted brow, her countenance losing any semblance of feminine gentleness, she broke into a furious rage driving them away.”‡

Meanwhile her namesake, Stephen’s wife, had not been idle. Attacking the capital from the south she gave the Londoners the opening they desired. “The bells were rung, the city flew to arms, and as the Empress was about to sit down to a grand entertainment she heard the tumult.”‡ She had just time to mount and ride off to Oxford, and in her flight many of the barons left her.

Stephen’s supporters began to recover, and when his opponents marched on Winchester the bishop again changed sides. In an attack on the castle the Empress was defeated. Again she fled, “strapped to a litter and nearly dead with fatigue,” and in the rout her brother Robert was captured. By November 1141 she was glad

\* *Gesta Stephani*, i. 89.

† *Stulla apparuit postquam elevata est in sublime*, Wm. of Newburgh, i. ix.

‡ *Gesta Stephani*, i. 93.

to exchange him for Stephen ; and the latter, after a third Church Council had rescinded his deposition, was crowned at Christmas for the second time.

The foreign party being in low water Robert of Gloucester went off to France to get help from Geoffrey of Anjou. The latter however took as little interest in his wife's designs as in her company, being more congenially engaged in reducing Normandy. But he allowed his son Henry, then about eight years old, to be taken to England ; and there for the next four years the boy remained with his mother. The Empress had retired with her best troops to Oxford, and Stephen was now prosecuting the war with vigour. The state of the country was deplorable. "In those days" says the chronicler, "England was like a rabbit warren, covered with adulterine castles, every baron an independent prince, law and order unknown." \* The people ate roots and herbs, and large areas of land were entirely deserted and uncultivated. Stephen's attacks on the old officials had ruined the executive and shattered the careful edifice of government which the late King had built up, while his concessions had got him neither obedience, loyalty nor gratitude. When the Queen brought a French princess over from Paris as a bride for her son, she was held to ransom in London by Geoffrey de Mandeville, one of her own supporters and the Keeper of the Tower ; and only by the greatest efforts could Stephen rescue his future daughter-in-law. Mandeville was typical of the feudal anarchy of the day. He changed from side to side, sold his help and ravaged the country indiscriminately. Nearly everyone suffered : only the Church profited under the control of the Legate, a man *callidus et pecuniosus supra modum*.† Twice it had regulated the succession and for the moment it alone represented law and order : but the barons were the strongest element and they were equally without allegiance or principles.

Stephen spent the spring of 1142 at Northampton where he lay ill, but by the summer he had recovered

\* Gesta Stephani, i. 93.

† Wm. of Newburgh, i. ix.



and was ready to resume the war. After a raid on Yorkshire to break up a tournament which he suspected, he took Wareham and moved on Oxford. It was then "a city with defences of great security, difficult of approach by reason of the depth of waters which washed it, very carefully environed with mounds and formidably strengthened by a castle and tower."\* But Stephen threw himself into an ancient ford, crossed the river and drove his enemies into the castle. There for some months he besieged the Empress; until at Christmas, her provisions being exhausted, she escaped by night over the frozen Thames and fled to Wallingford.

Fortune now turned again. Robert of Gloucester came back from France, and in a fight near Wilton the King was defeated and almost taken prisoner. But Stephen then captured Mandeville who had long been a thorn in his flesh; and during the next few years some adherents of the Empress joined him. The west still held out for her; while Normandy had now fallen completely into the hands of her husband who took Arques, Stephen's last castle, in 1145. Soon afterwards Robert of Gloucester died, and the Empress, seeing her cause failing, then determined to leave the country. Peace negotiations were begun, but as Stephen refused to submit them to Rome no treaty was concluded. His opponent however was tired of the struggle and she now made over her English claims to her son.

Henry, though barely sixteen, was full of enterprise. With a few knights he landed on the south coast of England. Almost at once he ran short of silver for his troops, so he applied to Stephen, who sent him the money "being always compassionate and full of kindly feeling, and thinking it a shame that good soldiers should go unpaid."† After a visit to Scotland Henry returned to France. There in 1152 his father died, leaving him the undisputed lord of Normandy, Maine, Anjou and Touraine. He then married Eleanor of Aquitaine, the divorced wife of Louis VII, and through her he acquired possession of all the

\* *Gesta Stephani*, ii. 99, 100.

† *Ibid.*, ii. 126.

lands from the Loire to the Pyrenees, becoming thus by far the most powerful prince in France.

In England Stephen was still uncomfortable and insecure. His foreign enemies had diminished; but he was surrounded by rebel barons and he had definitely antagonised the Church. His lawless treatment of the bishops, his gift of the see of York to one of his cousins against the Pope's wishes, and his refusal to allow the Archbishop of Canterbury to attend a Papal Council, had brought on him a threat of excommunication. Convinced that his enemies had gained the ear of Rome he forbade any legate to enter England, while to strengthen his dynastic position he determined to have his son Eustace crowned as his successor. The Pope however refused his sanction; the archbishop left the country; and his suffragans refused to act for him though Stephen confined them in the Tower.

Early in 1153 Henry, now a really dangerous rival, brought a second expedition to England where he was joined by his mother's friends. Stephen, who had just lost his wife, met him at Malmesbury, but a conflict was avoided. In August, while negotiations for peace were in progress, Stephen's eldest son succumbed to a fever: "he was an evil man," says the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, "wherever he was he did more evil than good."\* This double blow shattered the King and made him less averse to terms; and in November an arrangement was made by which Stephen was to reign for life and Henry, who was now made Justiciar, was to succeed him. Mutual pledges were exchanged; homage was paid by the barons to both princes; and they then visited London, Winchester and Oxford together. At Easter Henry went back to France.

During the summer Stephen did his best to pacify the country; but his spirit was broken and his health was failing. In the autumn he was seized with illness at Dover, and there on October 25th, 1154 he died "of his old complaint the emrods with the iliac passion."† He was aged about fifty-two and had reigned nineteen years.

\* Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 168.

† Sandford, 41.

He was buried at Feversham Abbey, but his tomb has long disappeared. His surviving son William of Boulogne died childless, but his daughter Mary, who married a son of the Count of Flanders, left female issue : he had also two bastard children.

A typical knight errant of his day there have been few more picturesque or popular Kings than Stephen. "Distinguished for his illustrious lineage and riches he was also humble, munificent and easy of access, adventurous and brave, discreet and patient. Courteous to all, not to be moved by bribery or favour, of so benign and gentle a disposition as almost to forget the eminence of his regal authority : in the midst of disasters unsubdued and unshaken : in the people's eyes soft and good and doing no injustice." \* He added the chapel which bears his name to the Palace of Westminster.

Little is known of his attainments but it is probable that he understood English, for his uncle King Henry had looked after his education and he was always friendly with the Londoners. He was a ready talker and used to swear by the "Birth of God." Living in the centre of the city and the court, an expert soldier, the King's favourite nephew and married to a great heiress, he may well have expected the crown. But though he had his mother's attractions he had not her abilities, and the arrival of his cousin the Empress from overseas damaged his prospects. Whether or not he rejected her advances she became his inveterate enemy. Her own marriages had both been failures, and when her fortunate rival usurped her throne she devoted herself to wreaking vengeance on him. Against a female foe the chivalrous Stephen was ill-matched : he had sworn fealty to her and he must always have felt the reproach of perfidy. Easily led by his brother and his barons, with many faults but few vices, he tried to please everyone. Charters were granted to the towns, castles to the nobles, and every castle meant a rival ruler. When revolts began he got rid of his ministers and offended his bishops.

\* *Gesta Stephani*, i. 44, 51, 52, 80.

Then the Empress attacked him, and a disputed succession arose between a man and a woman equally unfit to fill the throne.\* Gradually Stephen lost all Normandy and half England. Civil government gave way to civil war; feudal anarchy flourished; and all the King could do for his subjects was to fight with or against them. As a captain he shone; his spirit was at its best in misfortune; and his subjects, wretched though they were, always loved him. A favourite of fortune, his early life had been spent in happiness and success; but his later years were full of trouble and defeat; and at the end he saw wife, son and crown all reft from him. His easy temper had embarked him on an enterprise to which he was unequal and in which his weakness and lack of judgment were his undoing. Cheerful, debonair and gallant his courage never failed, his chivalrous nature was never warped, but neither in temperament nor in training was he the man to govern England. He was the last and the least lucky but the mildest and the most human of the Norman dynasty.

\* Trevelyan, 139.



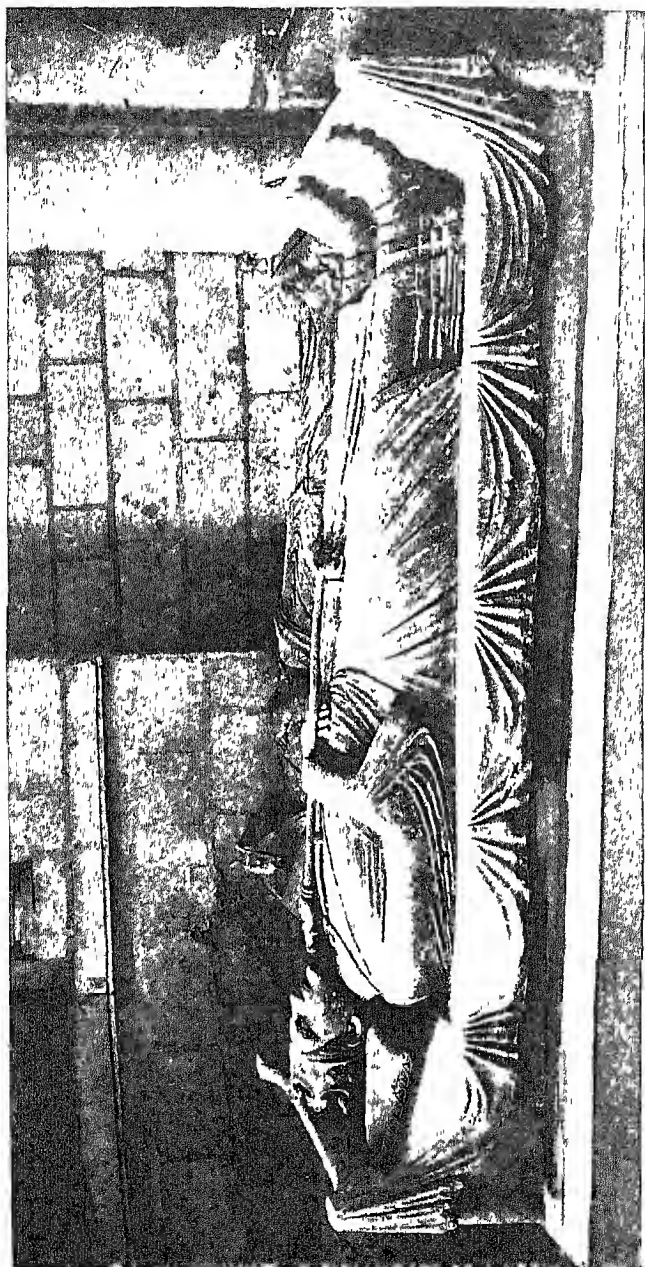
THE PLANTAGENETS

1154-1485

The Plantagenets got possession of England at a moment when it had been a prey to anarchy for nearly twenty years. The last Norman king had been a usurper who could not control his barons, who had alienated the Church and who had lost the home of his race, while Henry II, besides being the heir of both Saxon and Norman lines, was the rich and powerful ruler of the whole of Western France.







HENRY II  
AND ISABELLA OF ANGOULEME, WIFE OF JOHN  
From their tombs at Fontevraud

## HENRY II

1133-1189

HENRY II, styled FitzEmpress and Curt Mantle, was born on March 5th, 1133 at Le Mans, the eldest son of Geoffrey, Count of Anjou by Matilda, only daughter of Henry I of England and widow of the Emperor Henry V. The Angevin family, later called Plantagenet, was Breton by origin but for two centuries it had been established on the Loire, ruling the counties of Anjou and Touraine. During that time a succession of Fulks and Geoffreys had been fighting their northern neighbours, the Dukes of Normandy. Fulk V, Henry's paternal grandfather, only relinquished a lifelong contest with Henry's other grandfather in order to go off to the East and become King of Jerusalem; and his son Geoffrey at the age of eighteen then took over his inheritance in France. Three years previously Geoffrey had married the ex-Empress Matilda who was several years his senior and childless; but they were an ill-suited couple, for while he cared only for Anjou and Normandy her interests lay in Germany and England. After five years she bore him a son; and her father then summoned a Great Council in England at which the barons swore allegiance to mother and child as their future sovereigns. The King of Scots, Bishop Roger of Salisbury, the Justiciar, and Count Stephen of Blois, the King's nephew, were the first to take the oath. It was not popular, for the Anglo-Norman nobles hated Anjou as much as they disdained a woman's rule.

Henry lived with his mother in France until the death of his grandfather, the King of England, in December 1135. At that moment the Empress Matilda was in Anjou nursing her husband. Count Stephen, her cousin,

forestalled her by hurrying to London and seizing the crown. Normandy followed in England's wake, and the Empress found herself disinherited. She determined, however, to fight for her kingdom, so she went over to England and joined her half-brother Robert of Gloucester in a war against Stephen which was to last ten years. Henry remained at Chinon with his tutor Peter of Saintes, "a master of verse," until he was nine, when his uncle Robert fetched him to Bristol, where he was taught by one Matthew.

During these years Matilda's cause had gradually lost ground in England, though her husband had conquered Normandy. The death of her brother Robert determined her to relinquish the struggle with Stephen, and in 1146 she sent Henry back to France, following him herself soon afterwards. Two years later, when Henry was nearly sixteen, she made over to him her Norman dominions and her English claims. He was already advanced for his age, strong and square, with projecting eyes, full of passion, energy and vigour. With a few knights he now returned to England in order to revive his partisans. But the task was difficult, his funds ran out, and he had to borrow from Stephen. In Edinburgh his great uncle King David knighted him, and he then went with his parents to Paris where Louis VII formally invested him with the Norman duchy. On the way home Count Geoffrey died, and Henry inherited Anjou, thus becoming, at the age of nineteen, ruler of nearly all north-western France.

His visit to Paris had had a still greater result. There he had met Queen Eleanor, the French King's wife, who was in her own right Duchess of Aquitaine, the land between the Loire and the Pyrenees. This lady was about eight-and-twenty and had a remarkable career behind her. Her father William IX had taken with him to the First Crusade a swarm of mistresses,\* and Eleanor on succeeding him showed no disposition to belie her blood. She married Louis VII at fifteen: in the troubadour courts, where free thought and free love were the canon law, her judgments adhered to precedent: to protect

\* *Examina contraxerat puellarum*, Michelet, ii. 221, note.

her sister's paramour she fought a bloody campaign in which she burnt a cathedral and had twelve hundred townsfolk massacred; and she shocked the economy and morals of her husband by introducing to the sober court of France a luxury and licence hitherto unknown.\*

Converted by the eloquence and good looks of Bernard of Clairvaux, or anxious to enjoy herself in the East, she insisted on accompanying Louis to the Second Crusade. Like her father forty years before, she took a troop of Amazons with her and brought the expedition into equal discredit and danger by the hordes of servants and masses of baggage which she dragged about Asia Minor.† At Antioch she met her uncle Bohemond—"c'était le plus bel homme du temps et sa nièce semblait trop bien avec lui"‡: and at Jerusalem she embarked on a series of gallantries with Christians and Moslems, including a black slave; for she had married, she said, a monk, not a king. On her return to France she started a fresh intrigue with Geoffrey of Anjou "the most accomplished knight of his day," and though Geoffrey warned his son against her Henry preferred practice to precept.§ When after Geoffrey's death in March 1152 it was clear that she was going to add to her family her long-suffering husband at last divorced her. She then left Paris and sailed down the Loire towards her own land. Escaping two suitors on the way, one of them Henry's brother, she arrived at Poitiers and informed Henry that she was free; and in May Henry married her—*car merveilleusement l'aimoit*.|| Three months later she had a son, whom Henry presented to his subjects as his heir. The match was magnificent even for him; for he now held nearly all the seaboard of France with a dominion greater in extent and far more compact than that of King Louis. The latter tried

\* *L'élément sémitique était fort en Languedoc*, Michelet.

† Her *castra*, says one writer, were neither *casta* nor *castrata*.

‡ Michelet, ii. 256.

§ *Henricus in quem injectis oculis incestos Alienor Francorum regina, cum tamen haberet in fama privata quod Gaufrido patre suo lectum passimi Lodovici participasset*, Map, v. 226.

|| P. Aemyle, 298.

to recover Aquitaine, but the people preferred their duchess and the attempt failed.

Early in the following year Henry again went to England, this time with a considerable force. His name alone now struck terror, and Stephen was glad to compromise. He made Henry Justiciar of the kingdom and promised him the succession to the throne; and on these terms Henry left him in peace. In October 1154 Stephen died. Henry at once returned from France and at Christmas he was crowned at Westminster. He was twenty-one, hard, active and ambitious, with vast resources, few scruples and an extremely clever wife.

The first thing needed in England was to restore peace and order, and this Henry did. The adulterine castles were razed; Stephen's mercenaries were dismissed; the crown lands were resumed. The legal and financial system of Henry I was set up anew; capable ministers were appointed; rebels were sternly repressed. Within twelve months England had begun to recover from the misery of twenty years.

In the arrangements for Henry's succession the Church had played an important part, and for this he was not ungrateful. At the suggestion of Archbishop Theobald he appointed as Chancellor Thomas Becket, a capable Norman who had been Theobald's clerk and had been sent on various missions abroad. Between Becket and Henry a friendship sprang up: they rode, played and dined together, shared each other's political views and were equally anxious to get England settled. But Henry had other thoughts also. His possessions in France were already so great—nearly two-thirds of the country—that he wished them greater, and he soon began to move. He took Nantes and then sent Becket with a magnificent embassy to Paris to propose a marriage between his eldest son and the infant daughter of Louis. In return he was given the suzerainty of Brittany. Aided by the popularity of Eleanor he next made himself complete master of Aquitaine. Two short visits to England sufficed to recover

the three northern earldoms from Scotland and to reduce the Welsh princes; and he then prepared to enforce on Toulouse some claims derived from his father-in-law who had pledged the province away. With a large army Henry marched through the south of France; the Kings of Scotland and Aragon accompanied him, while the Chancellor alone led seven hundred knights. But Louis came to the support of his vassal the Count of Toulouse, and as Henry hesitated to fight his suzerain in person a peace was patched up. The expedition however had been useful. At Becket's advice Henry had let his mesne tenants compound their military service for a fixed sum called scutage with which he could hire mercenaries, and this practice opened the door to a new system of control and taxation which was to lead far.

In 1161 Archbishop Theobald died begging the King that Becket should succeed him. Henry kept the see of Canterbury vacant for a year and then told Becket that he must be Primate. There is little doubt that Becket did not want the place. As Chancellor he got on well with Henry, but he was a man of ideals and as a prelate he foresaw difficulties. "You will take your favour from me" he said to Henry "and our love will become hatred." \* Henry however insisted, and in May 1162 Becket was consecrated archbishop. From a statesman and a soldier he at once became a priest both in thought and deed, and from an ardent supporter of the Crown he changed to a bigoted champion of the Church.

At this time Henry was in the zenith of his strength. A man of exceptional capacity, his mind and body incessantly alert, he had lived from his earliest youth in a state of warfare. Yet he had not neglected other things. "In peace time he was rarely without a bow or a book" † and though he only used French or Latin, 'he knew something of every tongue from the Channel to the Jordan.' Always at work he combined the daring of the Angevins with the patience and sense of order of the Normans. He had never loved the pretensions of

\* Michelet, ii. 273.

† Map, 227.

the Church and he had even less desire to see the barons strong: what he wanted was to centralise, to restore justice and security, and by making his different dominions prosperous to ensure their producing material, money and men. The scutage tax embodied these ideas, for it brought baron and bishop, abbot and knight, to a common level, diminishing the independence both of feudalism and the hierarchy. During Stephen's reign the priesthood had gained in power, for the weakness of the ordinary courts had increased the prestige of the canon law, while the monastic movement had raised the credit of religion at the expense of that of the civil government. This tendency Henry wished to check, and he was specially anxious to put an end to the sacrosanct character of the 'criminous clerk' who was only amenable to his bishop.

Becket saw the matter differently. As Primate of England he was determined to defend his own caste against any invasion of its prerogative. Henry objected to appeals to Rome; Becket supported them. Henry taxed Church lands; Becket refused to pay. Henry insisted that the law of England must be supreme: Becket replied "saving my order." Disputes between the two became so frequent and bitter that Becket tried to leave the country. He was stopped, Henry asking "if the kingdom was not large enough to hold them both."\* In October 1164 matters came to a head at a Great Council in Northampton. Henry, "a ferocious lawyer," had called Becket to account for £20,000 which he alleged had been wrongly spent by him when Chancellor. Becket, after offering 2,000 marks, formally appealed to Rome. For this contumacy the barons at once condemned him, and he then fled to France and put himself under the protection of the Pope.

For six years a battle of words now raged between King and Archbishop. Sentences of excommunication and exile succeeded each other, the scandal grew, and the opponents of Becket in England and of Henry in

\* Davis, 215.

France eagerly fed the flame. Attempts at reconciliation were made, but gradually Becket became as obstinate as Henry and as reckless of results.

Henry meanwhile had not been idle in other matters. In a series of short campaigns he had reduced Wales to order; he had begun preparations for the conquest of Ireland; and he had brought Southern France to comparative tranquillity. But his composite empire was only bound together by its ruler, and to strengthen his dynasty he determined in 1170 to have his eldest son crowned. To this Becket objected, for to him as Primate the sole right of coronation belonged; and he forbade his bishops to act for him, threatening to suspend them. Henry was so angered that he fell ill. The long and sordid controversy had affected his character and roused the worst elements of his nature: that a "lowborn priest" whom he had raised to the highest places in Church and State should defy him and join his enemies had deeply wounded his pride. But on his recovery he met Becket at Amboise and came to apparent terms, though he would not give him the kiss of peace. In December 1170 Becket at last returned to Canterbury, but immediately on his arrival he suspended the Archbishop of York and excommunicated the Bishops of Salisbury and Lincoln. When this final outrage was reported to Henry at Bayeux "he burst into mad words"\* which were taken literally by some of those who heard them. Four of his knights crossed the Channel, rode to Canterbury, and on December 29th murdered Becket before the altar of his cathedral church. The crime convulsed Christendom, and for a moment it seemed as if Henry's day was done. When he heard of the murder "he grieved terribly, more than it is possible to say: for three days he would eat nothing nor speak to anyone, and for five weeks his doors were closed and he led a solitary life."†

Henry however was a practical man and he at once took steps to set himself right with the world: yet from this time his disposition became warped, his judgments

\* Wm. of Newburgh, ii. 186.

† Gesta Henrici II, i. 14.



went astray, and though his military successes continued they were often dead sea ashes. His eldest son was crowned, but true to the traditions of the Plantagenet house he hated his father. At his coronation feast the King, to do him special honour, served him at table: "There is no prince in Europe" he said "has such a butler": "It is not unjust" remarked the prince "for the son of an earl to wait upon the son of a king." Queen Eleanor was another trouble. She was now nearly fifty, and Henry, ten years her junior, was casting his eyes elsewhere. Despite her history the Queen was not one to brook infidelity, and the sympathies of her subjects and her sons were soon enlisted against a husband who was already surrounded by foes.

For Becket's murder Pope Alexander had threatened Henry with an interdict. Henry replied by organising a long-deferred expedition for the subjugation of Ireland—an expedition that had been consecrated by a papal bull. In October 1171 he landed at Waterford and in six months he reduced a large portion of the island, taking hostages from nearly all the native princes. He divided the country into fiefs which he granted to his followers, he fortified the coast towns, and then, leaving de Lacey as viceroy, he returned to Normandy to meet the Papal Legates. Before them he did penance for Becket's death, submitted to the Pope's censure and was absolved. It was not a moment too soon. While he had been away he had done much, but his enemies had done more. His eldest son, the younger Henry, had been left as ruler in England and he now claimed to be given the sovereignty of one or other of his father's dominions. Henry at once refused—for twenty years he had reigned supreme and he had no thought of resigning or dividing his power. But a wide plot had been laid against him, and when he arrived at Toulouse to receive its homage Count Raymond kneeling before him whispered "Beware of your sons and your wife." That night the younger Henry fled to Paris and joining forces with the King of France, the King of Scots, his brothers and many

barons from England, Normandy, Anjou and Aquitaine, he declared war on his father. King Henry did not hesitate an instant. Seizing his wife, the soul of the plot, as she was fleeing disguised in man's clothes to join her sons, he shut her up, first in the castle of Chinon and afterwards at Winchester, where he kept her for ten years. By a series of rapid moves he then defeated Louis on the Norman border, scotched a rebellion in Brittany and posted south to subdue Aquitaine. He was recalled by bad tidings from England where an invasion of Scots in the north and of Flemings in the east, as well as riots in London, made his presence vital. In July 1174 he crossed the Channel in a thunderstorm and rode to Canterbury. There, barebacked and barefoot, he did penance in the cathedral, was scourged by seventy monks, and knelt all night before the altar. At dawn he made gifts to the shrine and hurried to London, and there, four days later, he received news of the defeat and capture of the King of Scots. Within a few weeks England was at peace, and Henry, returning to Normandy, drove Louis from Rouen. By September his victory was complete and he was stronger than ever: the Pope had pardoned him, his sons were beaten, his wife was in prison, and his frontiers were secure.

But the ambitions of his children disturbed him, and to moderate their desires and instruct them in government he made Richard and Geoffrey, his second and third surviving sons, Dukes of Aquitaine and Brittany respectively. His eldest daughter he married to Henry of Saxony, his second to Alfonso of Castile,\* his third to William of Sicily. His influence on the Continent became pre-eminent, he was chosen as arbiter between his brother sovereigns, and his support of the Pope against the Emperor settled the peace of Europe. In England also his reforms prospered. Richard de Lacey and Ranulf de Glanville, his two Justiciars, were loyal, able and subtle men. Under their control the *Curia Regis* was developed,

\* Her four daughters became Queens and from her youngest son descends the male line of the present royal family of England.

the English fyrd or militia reorganised, and the whole country reassessed. But though in public Henry maintained his position his private conduct caused constant scandal. For some time he had given his affections to Rosamond de Clifford—*rosa mundi non rosa munda*—a young lady of Shropshire round whose name many legends have grown. That she was kept at Woodstock and that Eleanor tried to kill her is probable, but for the maze, the dagger and the cup authority is weak. He had a still less venial connection with Alais of France, the affianced bride of his son Richard. She had been the subject of a political bargain and had been sent as a child to be educated at the English court, where she remained for fourteen years. But when the time came for her marriage Henry refused to restore her to her father, while Richard “entertaining suspicions of the protection in which she had been kept, declined to have her.”\*

Other foes had been raised up by the King's incontinence. Bertrand de Born, a famous troubadour and a loyal subject of Queen Eleanor's, had taken his mistress's part against her husband; while Richard, her favourite son, specially resented her treatment. An alliance between his brothers to oust Richard from the government of Aquitaine brought him back to his father's side, and in 1183 the death of the younger Henry made Richard the heir apparent. Matters however were not much improved, for the King now proposed providing for John, his youngest son, at the expense of Richard, and he met Richard's refusal to give up Aquitaine by liberating Eleanor and sending her to rule her duchy, to which Richard could not object. Three years later Geoffrey died; and as suzerain of Brittany Philip Augustus, the new King of France, then claimed the custody of his son Arthur. This Henry refused as he had refused to restore Alais, and the increasing disputes between the two kings made Richard fear that his father might dispossess him entirely in favour of John. So he drew ever nearer to Philip, while Philip drew further from Henry.

\* Richard of Devizes, 30.

In 1187 the capture of Jerusalem by the Saracens for a moment stopped these quarrels; and Henry, who had taken the cross on various occasions for twenty years, promised to join Philip in a crusade. But an attack by Richard on Toulouse brought both kings into the field, until in November 1188 Richard definitely allied himself with Philip on his father refusing to acknowledge him as his heir.

Events now moved rapidly. Henry had few troops with him in Anjou, while Richard and Philip had large resources. In June 1189 Henry marched into Maine but was driven out of Le Mans. At Chinon he was struck down by fever, with an abscess in the groin. Richard and Philip then assaulted and took Tours. In the heart of his own country and within a few weeks Henry thus saw the city of his birth and the home of his race taken by his rebellious son and his hereditary foe. Angry and ailing he bowed to necessity, met his enemies and agreed to their demands; but as he gave Richard the kiss of peace he muttered "May the Lord never let me die until I am avenged on you." He asked for a list of the leading rebels, and the first name read to him was that of his favourite John, whom alone he had believed to be loyal: "and when he had learnt for certain that it was so, throwing himself back on his bed and turning his face to the wall, he groaned more deeply and said 'Let things take their course, I care no longer for myself or for anything in this world.'"<sup>\*</sup> He grew rapidly worse and at Chinon on July 6th, 1189 he died, attended only by one of his natural sons. His last words were "Alas, the shame for a King to be thus overcome." After his death his body was stripped and a bystander in charity put a rough cloak on it; "and thus," says the chronicler, "was this great King rightly called Curtnmantle."

Henry was buried in the neighbouring Abbey of Fontevraud where his tomb and effigy remain. He was aged fifty-six and had reigned thirty-five years, the same length of time as his grandfather Henry I. Of his legiti-

<sup>\*</sup> Giraldus Cambrensis, 221.

mate issue Richard, John and the three daughters mentioned above survived him. Among his natural children were Geoffrey, afterwards Archbishop of York,\* Morgan, the son of Lady Bloet, and William Longespée, Earl of Salisbury, whose mother may have been Rosamond: it is said that Alais of France also bore him a child.

There are many descriptions of Henry II. He was of a good height, well set, with a round head, short reddish hair and eyes 'which shone like fire if he was angry.'† His face was square like a lion's, his chest broad, his arms very strong, his shins livid with horses' kicks, his feet arched, one with an ingrowing toe-nail. His hands were rough and coarse, for he never wore gloves except when hawking. His clothes were simple and close-fitting and he was the first to introduce into England the short cloak—whence his nickname. He was a great huntsman and falconer.‡ He hardly ever sat down and used to keep his court standing for hours; a feverish energy which he said was to keep his passions under, though Map ascribes it to a fear of growing fat. He stayed little in one place, making constant progresses through the country. His food was plain and inclined to be scanty, and his palace was badly kept and uncomfortable.

He spoke no English though apparently he understood it. De Barri tells how during one of his Welsh expeditions a peasant greeted him, saying "God houlde dhe Cuning," and then urged him to forbid work on Sundays; whereupon the King said in French to his groom "Ask him if he has dreamed this."

With money he was thrifty, though on occasion he could be lavish. "He possesses" said the French King "men, horses, gold, silk, jewels, fruits and wild beasts, while in France we have only bread, wine and pleasure." When Philip asked what he would give to help against the

\* Map, who disliked him, says his mother was a prostitute named Hikenai and questions his being Henry's son, 227.

† Peter of Blois, 198.

‡ *Vehemens amator nemorum; dum cessat a praelis, in avibus et canibus se exercet*, Map, 227.

Saracens, Henry answered 'Sixty thousand marks this time,' "whereupon the King of France was struck as if by an arrow and all his princes were silent and did not dare to promise anything."\* But though undoubtedly rich Henry was rarely generous. He spent little on his followers or himself and he gave little to laymen: the seven abbeys he founded were 'more for a good name than anything else' says de Barri; and the writer of the *Roman de Rou* complains of his parsimony:—

*Li Reis jadis maint bien me fist,  
Mult me dona, plus me pramist,  
E se il tot duné m'eust  
Co k'il me pramist, mieulx me just.†*

From the Jews Henry drew a huge revenue, encouraging them to lend and making them pay for the privilege: his sixty-nine forests occupied nearly a third of England and brought him a large income, as did the customary gifts from suitors in the courts of law: while the long seaboard and varied resources of his empire maintained a trade and an exchange of commodities which enabled him to lay taxes on the towns in return for the charters he granted.

According to Map, Henry's principal faults were delay, secrecy and lack of consideration: yet he was affable, easy of access, patient of abuse, suffering and discomfort, sober, modest and faithful. Peter of Blois calls him "quick in counsel, full of eloquence, rarely forsaking a friend or being reconciled to a foe, reading quietly or discussing hard questions with his clerks whenever he had leisure. No one was more careless in danger, more fearful in prosperity, more constant in adversity."‡ De Barri dilates on his vices and incontinence, his blasphemy and duplicity, and ascribes his misfortunes to the curse that lay on his race and to his connection with Eleanor. William of Newburgh while admitting his faults, credits him with

\* Map 216, 230.

† *Roman de Rou*, 16532.

‡ Peter of Blois, 198.

many virtues—"a strenuous lover of peace, a stern pursuer of evildoers, a protector of the young and the poor, a King who never laid heavy burdens on his people. Excessive love and indulgence for his children and seeking after strange women were the cause of his later troubles—as had been the case with King Solomon." \*

Henry II was undoubtedly a remarkable man. Born of a race with Satan's blood in its veins St. Bernard had said of him "From the devil he comes, to the devil he will go," † alluding to the legend of a Countess of Anjou who always left mass before the elevation of the host, and when stopped by her husband had picked up two of her children and flown through the church window never to be seen again. The Angevin princes indeed exulted in rage and evil. When Henry was in one of his fits of anger he would bite a page's shoulder or roll on the floor gnawing the straw in passion, and at the end of his life, when everything was turning against him, he said "God has deprived me of what I most love; I will deprive him of what he most loves in me." ‡

'With tireless energy and an imperious will, with a clerkly mind trained in the best European learning of his day, a pioneer of jurisprudence, Henry II was an autocrat who yet ruled by law.' § His designs were vast: he used to say that the world was only large enough for one great man. Burning with passion and strength, endowed with exceptional capacity and power, understanding the science of government and the aims of the Church, he was often able to moderate his hand and tongue, and sometimes, if not to forgive, to forget. But all his sins found him out, and he paid for them in the coin he valued most, his children and his home. There is a record of his ordering a room in Winchester Palace to be painted with an eagle and its four young ones pecking it to death.

As a reformer hardly any praise is too high for him. He found England in anarchy, poverty and barbarism: he left it prosperous, stable and ordered. Ruling as a

\* Wm. of Newburgh, iii. xxvi.

† Giraldus Cambrensis, xxviii.

‡ *Ibid.*, xxv.

§ Trevelyan, 141.

despot from Scotland to Spain, devoted to duty, never sparing himself, anxious for peace, aggressive only for his rights, he was the greatest and probably the wisest King of his age. He died in time, not living to see one of his sons do homage to the Emperor and another to the Pope, nor to know that the proud inheritance of his Norman and Angevin sires was lost to his enemy the King of France. From his public work thousands of his subjects benefited; that his private life was wrecked by his own misdeeds only confirmed the dark traditions of his race.



## RICHARD I

1157-1199

RICHARD I, called Cœur-de-Lion, was born in Beaumont Palace at Oxford on September 8th 1157, the third but second surviving son of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. Of his education little is known and it seems to have been but slight. He was betrothed in infancy first to a daughter of Raymond of Aragon and afterwards to Alais, daughter of Louis VII of France. As the handsomest of her children he was his mother's favourite, and it was intended that he should inherit her lands. Accordingly in 1170 he went with her in state to Bordeaux where he was acknowledged as the future Duke of Aquitaine and Count of Poitou, by which latter title he was usually known. With these dignities he was ceremoniously invested, having the ring of St. Valery put upon his finger at Limoges and being enthroned in the abbot's chair at Poitiers. His early years he spent in France where he became imbued with the troubadour and Provençal spirit. He began his soldiering early, for when in 1173 his mother and his elder brother Henry rebelled against his father, Richard joined them and was present at the siege of Drievcourt. During the campaign he was knighted by Louis, and in Aquitaine he kept up the struggle for over a year, until Henry drove him into a corner and made him surrender. But Richard's qualities appealed to an indulgent parent, and he was soon taken back into favour.

In his southern government Richard had success: "during his tender years he ruled and subdued an hitherto indomitable territory."\* In 1176 a revolt on a large

\* Giraldus Cambrensis, viii.



RICHARD I  
AND HIS MOTHER ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE  
From their tomb, at Fontevraud



scale broke out in the duchy. Richard was in his element, "for fighting was the breath of his life; he was furious to rush to arms." \* Joining forces again with his elder brother he rapidly crushed his opponents and after taking Limoges and Angoulême he marched down to Bayonne and the Spanish border. There he harried the robber barons of the Pyrenees and by reducing some of their castles partly pacified that unsettled region. Already an intrepid man-at-arms he became a leader and a strategist as well: but he was so cruel in his punishments that though he brought the duchy into order it was at the expense of his popularity. Soldiering however was by no means his only interest. He was also a distinguished troubadour and used to take part in the *jeux floraux* of Provence with his friends Sancho of Navarre and Bertrand de Born. Yellow-haired, blue eyed and immensely strong he grew up tall and handsome, "of beauty worthy of an empire." He was an adept at knightly exercises, an expert archer and swordsman and of striking courage; but his health was poor, and like his father he was nervous and could never keep still.

In 1177, when Richard was twenty and the Princess Alais fifteen the question of his marriage was raised, the Pope and the King of France both demanding its celebration. Report accused King Henry, in whose custody Alais had lived since childhood, of having seduced her, and Richard succeeded in deferring the ceremony. He stayed on in Aquitaine, diverting himself with its pleasant life, composing roundels, hunting bears, besieging castles and hanging rebels, and gradually he grew so powerful that his brother Henry, fearful of the future, persuaded their father to require Richard to renew his homage. Richard refused, and his brother then attacked him. But Richard besought his parent's help, and the King came to Limoges where he was nearly killed in the street by the archers of his eldest son.

Soon after this, in 1183, the younger Henry died, and Richard became his father's heir. The King had now

\* Gir. Camb., viii.

determined to divide his dominions afresh so as to provide for his youngest son John, and accordingly he released Queen Eleanor, whom he had kept in prison for ten years, and ordered Richard to hand over his duchy to her. Richard eluded this command, and in November 1187 came the news of the capture of Jerusalem by the Saracens. Full of piety and zeal he took the cross in the cathedral of Tours, the first Western prince to do so. Almost at once he had to lead an expedition against Toulouse where he was opposed by Philip Augustus, the King of France. Henry came to help his son; but Richard, who still thought himself wronged, joined Philip, did him homage for the duchy and demanded Alais from his father. Henry refused either to acknowledge Richard as his heir or to give up his bride, so Philip and Richard attacked him. The campaign was fought in Anjou, and in a skirmish Richard, only half armed, came up with Henry's rearguard. Being at a disadvantage he begged William Marshal, its leader, not to kill him; whereupon Marshal, driving his spear into Richard's horse, left him and galloped off.

*E quant li quens le vit venir  
 Si s'ecria par grant hair  
 ' Por les gambes Dieu, Marechal,  
 Ne m'ociez : ce serait mal,  
 Ge sui toz desarmez issi.'  
 E li Marechal respondi  
 ' Nentil, diables vos ocie  
 Car jo ne vos ocirai nie.'  
 Si feri sur son cheval lors  
 De sa lance parmi le cors.\**

Very soon the two allies closed in on Henry and drove him north. Near Chinon they forced him to accept their terms, and two days later, on July 6th 1189, the King died of anger, grief and suffering. When Richard entered the room where his father's body lay, blood, it was said, gushed from the nostrils.†

Richard now succeeded to the crown of England, the

\* Guillaume le Marechal, 8837.

† Gesta Henrici II, i. 71.

first rightful heir to do so for two centuries. He did not hurry to his new kingdom, but sent orders to release his mother from prison; and after taking possession of the treasure at Chinon he went to Rouen where he was girded with the sword of Normandy. He then again did homage to Philip, paid him 20,000 marks and pledged himself to marry Alais. To those of his father's friends who had fought against him he was generous—especially to Marshal—but he employed only his own followers. In August he crossed to Southampton, checked the hoard at Winchester and met his mother who was acting as Regent. He then proceeded to London. On September 3rd he was crowned at Westminster with unusual splendour. The cap of state, the golden spurs, sceptre and rod were carried in their appointed places; while the three swords were borne by John, the King's brother, William of Salisbury, his bastard brother, and David, brother to the King of Scots.\* After the crown came Richard himself, supported by the Bishops of Durham and Bath, a canopy held over him by four barons. Many people had assembled from all over the country for the ceremony, but the Londoners marred it by pillaging and murdering a number of Jews. The news of this was brought to the King at the coronation banquet in Westminster Hall, and he sent Ranulf de Glanville to appease the riot; but the mob had got out of hand and nothing could be done.

Richard's mind was now entirely occupied with the approaching Third Crusade. In the prime of life and vigour, a warrior by profession and predilection, he was burning to make a name for himself as a champion of Christendom. His broad dominions, England, Normandy, Anjou and Aquitaine, were quiet, and for the moment he had neither rivals nor foes. So he set about assembling an army and a fleet, and, most needful of all, raising money. For this purpose his presence chamber became a market overt;† all places, spiritual and secular, were for sale, and the boldest bidder got the best bargain. The late King had left 100,000 marks in the exchequer, but

\* Lingard, ii. 242.

† Palgrave, Rot. Cur. Reg., xii.

this did not nearly suffice for Richard's needs. The royal demesnes were sold and the private property of the Crown pledged. Changes in the great offices of state produced more money. Geoffrey, the King's bastard brother, paid him £3,000 for the archbishopric of York while William de Longchamp gave the same amount for the chancellorship: the Bishop of Durham bought the earldom of Northumberland to hold in conjunction with his see; and the King of Scotland redeemed his homage and resumed the border castles for 10,000 marks. Exemptions from the crusade brought in considerable funds, and Richard is credited with saying that he would sell London itself could he find a purchaser.\* To his brother John he refused nothing, adding the earldoms of Cornwall, Devon, Lancaster and Nottingham to his lands in Ireland and Normandy, and giving him the hand of Isabel of Gloucester, the greatest heiress in England. But having little trust in John's good faith he made him promise to keep out of the country for three years.

In December 1189 Richard crossed to France, leaving Longchamp as Justiciar in England. Early in the new year he met Philip, and the two princes swore to support each other during the crusade both at home and abroad. They were still fast friends, "eating out of one plate and sleeping in one bed." Richard now received news of more massacres of Jews at York "to celebrate the crusade," and as they were his principal moneylenders and he had promised them security he ordered Longchamp to punish the criminals: but, as before, the leaders escaped. During the summer he went slowly by way of Anjou and Gascony to Marseilles, where he met his fleet, and in September 1190 he arrived at Messina, whither Philip had preceded him.

Richard's crusade as described in the contemporary *Itinerarium Ricardi Regis* reads like a fairy tale, and to the crusaders it probably seemed one. In his train he took Glanville, the late Justiciar, and Baldwin, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who both died on the expedition,

\* Wm. of Newburgh, 4, v.

as well as a host of knights and pilgrims. He had intended to pass the winter pleasantly (*socialiter hiemare*) in Messina, as the place was convenient for his troops; but the inhabitants, "content at the arrival of one great king, were unwilling to be oppressed by entertaining two." \* He was also anxious to recover the dowry of his sister Joan who had recently lost her husband, King William of Sicily, and to secure a hidden treasure, left it was said for the crusaders and consisting of a golden table, a golden chair, twenty-four golden plates, a hundred galleys, sixty thousand measures of wheat and as many bottles of wine.† But Tancred, the new King, had no intention of making such a present to Richard, and he sent back Joan with the furniture of her bed-chamber only. Richard, glad of an excuse for a diversion, then seized a castle on the straits, landed his forces, called for those 'whose hearts were not in their shoes,' and by a sudden attack took the town 'quicker than a priest would chant mattins' and flew his flag from Tancred's towers. Philip of France who was lodged in the palace, resented this independent action, and though he got a share of the plunder the two were never friendly again, while Tancred profited from their quarrel and fanned its flames. Richard however made himself at home, building a wooden castle outside the walls which he called 'Mate-griffion'—griffion being the name given to the townsmen. During the winter he hunted and visited local shrines, and at Christmas he entertained at dinner every gentleman in the two armies and gave them all presents: "there was not a dirty napkin or a wooden platter at the feast." ‡

For some time Richard had determined not to marry Alais. An open scandal had been impossible in his father's lifetime, but the position was now altered, and before leaving England he had despatched his mother to the court of Sancho of Navarre, one of his oldest friends, to ask for the hand of Sancho's daughter Berengaria. Queen Eleanor, well over sixty 'though still incomparable' now arrived at Naples with Berengaria, 'a girl more learned

\* Wm. of Newburgh, 4, xii. † Richard of Devizes, 20. ‡ *Ibid.*, 28.



than beautiful,' and when Philip stood up for his sister's rights Richard bought him off with the valuable Norman fortress of Gisors. After sending his mother home and ordering Longchamp, who had made himself unpopular in England, to be replaced by de Coutances, the Archbishop of Rouen, he set sail for Syria in April 1191.

In his journey across the Mediterranean Richard led his fleet of two hundred ships in a red galley, the *Trenchmer*, which carried a great lantern on her poop to signal at night. For propriety's sake Joan and Berengaria had sailed in a separate dromond, but in the *Ægean* a storm scattered the squadron. The Chancellor's vessel with the great seal was lost, Richard was driven into Rhodes and the two Queens to Limasol in Cyprus. Here the inhabitants, believing that the English had tails, plundered their baggage; while the local Emperor, Isaac Comnenus, a brother-in-law of the Duke of Austria, tried to annex their persons. When Richard arrived he was furious at this disrespect for princes and pilgrims, so he disembarked his men and advanced on the Greeks. One of his chaplains advised him not to pursue them inland but Richard said "Look after your writings, Sir clerk, and leave fighting to us,"\* and in a short skirmish he routed the islanders and unhorsed the Emperor, who fled to the castle of Buffavento.

On May 12th Richard celebrated his marriage with Berengaria in the cathedral at Limasol. "Happy and splendid, laughing and pleasing everyone, he wore a rose-coloured satin tunic with a cloak of striped silver tissue, a scarlet bonnet brocaded with gold, while the hilt of his sword and his baldric were covered with jewels." To protect the Queen he formed a company of twenty-four of his companions who wore a blue band round the knee—precursors perhaps of the Knights of the Garter.

He soon reduced the whole island, capturing Buffavento, taking much treasure and loading Isaac with silver chains, since he had sworn not to put him in irons. Leaving a garrison behind he then sailed for Acre. On

\* *Itinerarium Ricardi Regis*, 192.

his passage he sank a Turkish vessel full of munitions with "bottles of Greek fire and other dangerous machines of destruction." His arrival was the event of the crusade. As he sailed into harbour "on a calm night through the transparent air, trumpets were sounded and drums beaten, the people came singing to meet him with flagons of wine, and the whole valley was lit up by candles and torches."\*

The crusaders' camp was full of famous fighters, and competition at once began between the French and the English. Philip was paying his men three bezants a month; Richard outbid him by offering four. Each nation emulated the other in feats of arms and their feeling grew so bitter that they would not fight side by side. The siege of Acre however went on, and Mategriffon, brought from Sicily, was set up afresh. Richard soon fell ill: he had been ailing before he left England, suffering from ague and boils: in Cyprus he had become worse and he was now attacked by the local disease "Arnoldia." But he insisted on being carried into the line of battle in a silver litter, from which he used his crossbow with effect.

On July 12th Acre surrendered, but in the assault the French mangonels were destroyed by Greek fire. This much upset Philip who had 'become nameless' in comparison with Richard. The latter loved to remind him that he had not got Acre alone: "One hand has no right to bestow what belongs to two. Ho, Ho, by God's throat."† The Count of Flanders had just died, so Philip, anxious to secure his lands, seized the excuse and went home, leaving his troops under the command of the Duke of Burgundy.

Richard spent a month putting Acre in a state of defence and then, as their ransom was not paid, beheaded two thousand hostages. On August 22nd the crusaders began their march to Jaffa, the fleet escorting them along the coast. Their losses were already heavy, for the climate, the food and their way of living were against them. "The English ate and drank enormously so that the merchants who brought in victuals could

\* Itin. Ric. Reg., 212.

† Richard of Devizes, 61, 68.

hardly credit what they saw": it was difficult to get the men out of the city which "abounded in delight, with the very best wine and the most beautiful girls, so that the faces of wise men blushed at their imprudence."\*

The column moved with Richard at its head, Norman troops surrounding his standard which was set up in a wooden car: Templars, Hospitallers, English, Bretons and Angevins followed, but the women were sent away. On the march the army was harassed by the Saracens, parched by the heat and bitten by tarantulas. But enthusiasm animated all: they prayed and wept every evening, and their leader encouraged their devotions. By his rank and ability Richard was now their accepted chief, but he had many foes, among them the Marquess of Montferrat, whose candidature for the throne of Jerusalem he had opposed, and the Duke of Austria, whose banner he had thrown down at the taking of Acre. *Both were to have their revenge.*

On September 7th was fought the battle of Aysuf where Richard distinguished himself again. "All fled from his sword: fiercely and alone he attacked and everywhere he slew the Turks." Had his commands been obeyed a complete victory would have been won; but the Hospitallers charged too soon and their action threw the column into confusion. At Jaffa fresh discussions began, the French wishing to fortify the town, while Richard was for marching on Ascalon. After being nearly captured when out hawking he started negotiations with the Saracens and struck up a friendship with Saladin's brother which caused some disquiet in the army. But no terms were come to, and in December the army advanced to Ramleh, though they were not strong enough to assault Jerusalem. They then fortified Ascalon, Richard contributing largely and working with his men at the walls. In this labour the Duke of Austria refused to partake; he was not, he said, a carpenter or a mason. Richard in a rage kicked him, a second debt to be discharged.†

During the winter the troops suffered severely. The

\* Itin. Ric Reg., 4.

† Michaud, ii., 482, note.

rains were heavy, fevers rife, provisions short, and casualties numerous. Continual disagreements with the Duke of Burgundy vexed Richard so much that early in 1192 he returned to Acre: but by Easter he was back in Ascalon and there he received letters from England telling him of the misdeeds of his brother John. He determined to press matters on, and a council was held to elect a King of Jerusalem. Conrad of Montferrat was selected, but a few days later he was murdered at Tyre, and the French at once accused Richard of the crime. Henry of Champagne was then chosen, so Richard to console his own candidate, Guy de Lusignan, gave him the principality of Cyprus.

In May came further news of John's delinquencies. Richard saw that he must return at once and he strove to finish the campaign, but the leaders' quarrels drove him to his bed with rage. A fresh advance was made but again it was decided to retire. Richard rode as far as the fountain of Emmaus, within sight of the towers of Jerusalem, but held his shield before his eyes as being unworthy to look on a city which he could not rescue. In June he captured a caravan from Egypt, "with spices, gold, silver, silk, chessboards, plate, cinnamon, pepper, sugar, biscuits, tents, asses, mules, horses and camels." \* Returning to Acre he then prepared to leave Palestine but on July 30th he got news that Jaffa was invested by Saladin and was at the point of surrender. He resolved to save it and sailed that night with what troops he could collect. As he arrived a priest swam off to tell him that the town was taken. Hearing however that there were still some defenders in the castle Richard said "If it pleases God we will all die here, but let him perish who does not advance." Then leaping into the sea without his leg armour he shot several Saracens with his cross-bow, and with a few followers succeeded in relieving the castle, routing its besiegers and encamping in their tents. During the night there was a strenuous counter-attack, but Richard beat it off with only ten mounted companions, "many of them unarmed and even without their

\* Itin. Ric. Reg., 390.

drawers:" in the fight he lost his favourite charger Flavel. This brilliant affair was entirely due to Richard's personal prowess: "he cut the heads of the Saracens down to the teeth, decapitated them, and lopped off their arms until the skin of his right hand was quite broken and his body was covered with darts like a hedgehog" '*sicut ericius.*'\* A few days later 'with one blow he cut off the head, shoulder and right arm of an emir.'

As a result of his exertions and of the insanitary conditions of Jaffa Richard fell seriously ill; but news being brought him that the Duke of Burgundy was dying "he raised his hands, uttered a curse, saying 'May God destroy him,' and from his delight at the report the fever gave way."† But he knew that with divided counsels success was impossible so he now determined to make peace. A chivalrous amity already existed between him and Saladin, and terms were soon agreed. Ascalon was to be dismantled, but Jaffa was to be retained by the Christians who were to be allowed to visit the Holy Sepulchre. Saladin declared however that his faith would never allow him to give them the true cross, "the shameful monument of their idolatry."‡ In September the treaty was signed, Richard telling Saladin that in three years he would return to take Jerusalem; to which Saladin replied that if he had to lose it he would rather do so to Richard than to any other prince. The campaign had cost the crusaders 300,000 lives and incalculable treasure.

For some weeks Richard remained at Haifa, paying his debts with money got from the Templars. Then, after sending off the two Queens in advance, he sailed for home himself on October 9th 1192. He had to hurry, for menacing messages kept coming from England, but it took him a month to reach Corfu. There, knowing that his enemies were watching for him both in Sicily and France, he changed his ship and sailed up the Adriatic in disguise, intending to continue his journey by land. But near Aquileia he was wrecked and had to take to the

\* It. Ric. Reg., vi. xxii.

† Richard of Devizes, 92.

‡ Michaud, ii. 476.

road with a few servants. He had let his hair and beard grow long and was wearing the clothes of the country; but people suspected who he was "because of the amount of money he spent, against the custom of the inhabitants." Riding night and day he arrived late in December outside Vienna with only a single page, William Marsh. They halted at a small inn in the suburbs and while Richard, who was dressed as a cook, lay down to rest, Marsh went into the town to change some money. He was seized and brought before the Duke of Austria, who made him disclose his master's lodging, and that evening Richard was taken prisoner while he slept.\*

At first Richard was confined in the castle of Durrenstein on the Danube, where 'though his feet were not fettered, yet the filthy guards, their smell, dirt and conversation, were worse than a den of beasts.'† The Emperor Henry was quickly informed of his capture and sent word of it to Philip, who passed it on to John. For a time the secret was kept; but a month later the Archbishop of Rouen got a copy of Philip's letter and gave it to the Council in London, and they at once despatched two abbots to Germany to search for Richard. One tale says that he was found by Blondel de Nesle, a troubadour who heard him singing in his tower, another that Berengaria saw one of his jewelled collars for sale in a shop in Rome.

During Richard's absence much had happened in England. John had soon got out of his promise to keep away and had succeeded in ousting Longchamp who was a loyal though tactless man. The next Justiciar was the Archbishop of Rouen, and he did his best to withstand John; but the latter's influence increased, he secured many of the crown castles and in a short time he practically ruled the land.

Directly Philip and John heard of Richard's capture they strove to delay his release, and the Emperor, who had now bought him from Leopold of Austria, readily accepted their bribes. But Queen Eleanor threw the whole weight of her influence on Richard's side. She

\* Roger of Hoveden, iii. 186, 198.

† R. de Diceto, ii. 186.

wrote to the Pope and the German Diet supported her. The three princes were threatened with excommunication, and this powerful argument prevailed. Indeed all Europe was on Richard's side, for it seemed an outrage that the King who had led the crusade should be held to ransom by the lay Head of Christendom. Even his own people regretted Richard, for his fame had made them forget his faults.

*Li rars qui molt ert desmez  
Del pople dont il ert amez \**

On March 23rd, 1193 the two abbots found Richard near Speyer. "He was delighted to see them and asked much about the state of his kingdom and of the King of Scots"; of John he said "My brother is not a man who could subdue the land were there anyone who could repel him with the least force." † During his captivity Richard had behaved with much dignity, and he now appeared before the Emperor and formally denied that he had had any share in the death of Conrad of Montferrat. His principal evidence was a letter from a famous assassin, the Old Man of the Mountain, but his defence was accepted and his ransom fixed at £100,000. With difficulty this sum was raised in England, Normandy, Anjou and Aquitaine: Caen gave more than London, while John kept the money collected on his own lands. Queen Eleanor with many prelates and nobles then crossed the seas to visit Richard; but it was a year before he was set free, and he had to do homage to the Emperor, receiving in exchange the nominal crown of Arles. When at last he landed in England on March 20th 1194 he had been absent from his kingdom for over four years. During his captivity his old opponents Tancred and Saladin had died, and his brother John now fled to France.

*Quant li quens Johan sans dolance,  
Sout del frere la delivrance  
E qu'en la terre s'en veniet  
Ne l'osa ne volt attendre.‡*

\* Guill. le Mar., 10,013.

† R. of Hoveden, iii. 198.

‡ Guill. le Mar., 10152 et seq.

"On his arrival Richard was received at St. Paul's with great joy and solemn processions." At Nottingham he reduced the last of John's castles, and in April he was crowned afresh at Winchester to free his royalty from the stain of imprisonment. In May 'as he was dining in the Small Hall at Westminster' news was brought him that Philip had invaded Normandy. Richard swore that he would never turn back until he had fought him, and to keep the letter of his oath he had a hole broken in the south wall of the palace and through it he set off for the coast.\* Summoning his knights and laying a carucage on the land he made his mother Regent and then quitted his kingdom for the last time.

The second half of Richard's reign presents a darker picture than his earlier days. His intention undoubtedly was to resume his crusade, but to do this he had first to secure his own dominions and then to find funds. He easily drove Philip out of Normandy, for his own men were now back from the East and his name worked wonders. At Lisieux John came in to make his submission: Richard pardoned him, saying that he wished he could forget John's crime and that John could remember it.†

*Vint al rei : as piez li char  
Unques point ne l'eu meschar :  
Li reis l'en leva par main  
E besa son frere german  
E dist "Johan, ni aiez garde  
Enfens estes · en male garde  
Remainsistes  
Levez di ci, aiez." ‡*

After suppressing a rebellion in Aquitaine Richard made a truce with Philip, but it was an illusory pact, and for the remainder of his life he was always fighting the French. He built a fortress at Andelys on the Seine, the famous Château Gaillard which was to defend his Norman frontier. It was a triumph of fortification, for Richard was a military engineer of real genius, far in advance of his age. This castle was his delight: "*Quelle besle fil ma fil d'ung*

\* Trivet, 154.

† *Ibid.*, 154.

‡ Guill. le Mar., 10405 et seq.



an" \* he used to say. Philip swore that he would take it were its walls of iron: Richard answered that he would hold it were its walls of butter. But it stood on church lands and soon brought the duchy under an interdict. Meanwhile Philip incited Richard's nephew and heir, the young Arthur of Brittany, to rebel against his uncle, and Richard again found himself fighting his family. Petty warfare did not improve his character. He was always levying money for his troops and always selling offices: he made a new great seal so as to cancel grants under the old one and he plundered whenever he could. Repining, fretting and complaining, his bravery gradually degenerated into cruelty and his gallantry into lust. With advancing years he had put on flesh, and Bertrand de Born when anxious to annoy him used to call him 'the fat man from Poitiers.'

In 1198 Richard went to Cologne for the election of a new Emperor, and his influence secured that prize for his nephew Otto. Early in the following year, after a fight at Gisors in which Philip fell into a river, news was brought him of a hoard of gold hidden in the castle of Chaluz.† Richard set off to seize it and during the siege he was hit from the walls by a poisoned arrow. The wound festered, fever set in and it was soon clear that he would die. The castle was taken, and de Gurdon, the archer who had shot him, was brought in. Richard asked what was his grievance. "You have killed my father and my brother" said the man, "I hope that I have killed you." Richard ordered him to be released, but Mercadier, the captain of his mercenaries, had him taken out and flayed. As the King lay dying a monk told him to think of his three daughters: "By God's legs" said Richard "you lie, I have no daughters." "Yes," said the monk, "you have; they are Pride, Avarice and Lust." "Then," said Richard, "I will marry them, the first to the Templars, the second to the Grey, and the third to the Black monks." ‡ On April 6th

\* Green, i. 138.

† Or Nantium.

‡ Rapin, i. 257 and Hemmingburgh, i. 228

1199, he died: he was aged forty-one and had reigned almost ten years. He was buried at the Abbey of Fontevraud near Chinon, where his effigy still remains. He left no legitimate issue but one natural son Philip, Seigneur de Cognac in Guenne. His wife Berengaria, who never visited England, died in Maine in 1230.

Richard Cœur-de-Lion was a man of brilliant appearance, manners and attainments. The first soldier of his day he was also a poet, singer and musician of no mean order. In his remaining tençons, written probably in captivity, some of his character is shewn.

*“ Or sachon bien mi hom e mi baron  
Engles, Norman, Pettavin et Guascon  
Que ge n'avoie si povre compaignon  
Queu laissasse por aver en prison  
Ge nol di pas, por nulla raison  
Mas anquar soige pris.” \**

*Vos me laistes aidier  
Por treime de gueridon,  
E car s'aves qu'a Chinon  
Non a argent ni denier  
E vos volez riche roy  
Bon d'armes, qui vos port foy.  
Bon guerrier a l'estendant  
Trovelez le roy Richart †*

A born leader of men, beloved by his troops despite his rigour, his activity, courage and profusion were extraordinary, while his natural abilities impressed all his contemporaries. So quick was he in detecting the moral qualities of a man from his looks 'that no one who was a coward or whose conscience accused him could bear to be with him.' ‡ His mind was alert and he could on occasion take quick decisions, but his greed often made him hesitate, so that Bertrand de Born used to call him "*Oc e no*"—yea and nay.§ His speech was the *langue d'Oc* and he knew Latin well, but he never learnt English.

\* Walpole, Royal and Noble Authors, Ric. I.

† Poètes François, i. 21.

‡ Itin. Ric. Reg., 447.

§ Michelet, ii. 334.

He was very devout and humble in his religion; during mass he used to walk up and down the nave chanting the psalms. As keen a hunter as he was a warrior he would take almost any risks in the chase, but the tale of his getting his name of Cœur de Lion from having torn out a lion's heart is a legend: he had a simpler and better title to it.

His relations with women are little known, though one chronicler calls him *lubricus valde et in amore mulierum exandescens*.<sup>\*</sup> In his youth he is said to have carried off Johanne de St. Pol, and for a time he kept as his mistress Maenz de Montagnac, a houri of the south whose favours he shared with Alfonso of Aragon, Raymond of Toulouse and Bertrand de Born. The long drawn ignominy of Alais perhaps chilled his interest in marriage and he was finally content to take his mother's choice who was a sister of his friend and a troubadour like himself. In the East Richard set a much needed example, though on his return to France his morals were blamed, and for a time he lived apart from his wife; but after an illness he amended his life and took her back.<sup>†</sup> He was never constitutionally strong and his health and character undoubtedly suffered from his crusade and captivity. He was ill when he went to Syria; his stay there strained both his body and mind, and the long year in Austria sapped his patience and energy. When he came back he was an altered man—irritable, bitter and disillusioned, and like his father he seems to have become more immoral as he grew older.<sup>‡</sup>

Born to all the splendour of a great King's son Richard's character and temperament were formed in France. As a child his mother had fired him with tales of the East; the confines of his duchy touched the Mediterranean, and he grew up in an atmosphere of romance, religion and rapine, hardened to bloodshed and looking on love and

<sup>\*</sup> Hemmingburgh, i. 228.

<sup>†</sup> R. of Hoveden, iii. 288.

<sup>‡</sup> Some chroniclers accuse him of the vices which disgraced Rufus, but as Stubbs observes these darker details need not always be taken *in pessimam partem*, for the monks loved to magnify immorality.

war as the real business of life: he always remained the typical knight-errant, *preux, courtois, large*. At the age of thirty-one, in the prime of his strength and age, he had succeeded to the widest dominions that any English sovereign was to inherit for six centuries, an empire stretching from Berwick to Bayonne and from the Shannon to the Rhone. Inspired by a chivalrous though half pagan Christianity, with a golden future before him, he started for Syria convinced of his duty, more covetous of glory than of gain. But the crusade shattered his hopes and before inactivity his enthusiasm sank, so that his later years were a sad ending to his life. His strategy and statesmanship deferred for a while the break up of the Angevin Empire just as his extortion and recklessness made its control heavier for his successors; but in England he had little interest, for he regarded it merely as a source from which to get money and men. Yet there "his renown reached thousands of homes too humble to suffer directly from his exactions"\*—*ses aventures firent oublier ses cruautés*.

Saladin, a grave and generous foe, blamed his ambition but praised his bravery; and for many years Arabs would chide their children and curb their steeds with the name of "*Malek Ric*." Richard no doubt had many faults, but Sismondi's criticism "a bad son, a bad brother, a bad husband and a bad King" is not deserved. He was the hero of his own great race, the only prince who added to their empire and lost none of it; four at least of his successors strove to make him their model. A true mediæval pattern of chivalry, a real paladin of the crusades, he dazzled the eyes of Europe in its darkest days, and his courage and constancy, his disappointments and disasters, may perhaps excuse his neglect of the land which still holds him in such high honour.

\* Itin Ric. Reg, xvii.

## JOHN

1167-1216

JOHN, called Sansterre or Lackland, was born on December 24th, 1167 in the palace at Oxford, the youngest son of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. He got his nickname from the fact that his elder brothers Henry, Richard and Geoffrey were to monopolise the royal dominions, and perhaps for this reason he became his father's favourite. At the age of three he was made Count of Mortain, a title by which he was usually known, and he was educated under the Justiciar, Ranulf de Glanville, passing most of his early life in England. His father tried to marry him well but could not persuade his eldest son to resign the lands in Anjou which were to be John's portion. In 1174, however, Henry settled a revenue on John and two years later he induced his cousin the Earl of Gloucester to betroth his daughter Avice or Isabella to John and to make him his heir. This was a great alliance, though within the prohibited degrees; and Henry, to increase John's position, then proposed to make him King of Ireland and asked leave of Pope Urban to crown him with the "diadem of peacock's feathers," a request which was granted though the ceremony did not take place.

The death of Henry's eldest son in 1183 improved John's prospects. The King sent him to Normandy and tried to make Richard give up Aquitaine in his favour. When Richard refused John, egged on by Bertrand de Born, joined his brother Geoffrey in attacking him.\* But

\* "Bertram dal Bornio, quelli  
Che diedi al Re Giovanni i ma conforti  
I feci 'l padre e' l figlio in se ribelli." *Inferno*, xxviii. 135.



JOHN

From his Great Seal



Richard beat them both so thoroughly that John returned to his father's court and asked to be allowed to go to the crusade. This the King forbade, but sent him as viceroy to Ireland: and in March 1185 John crossed to Dublin with a large force under Glanville. His venture in administration was as short as it was unsuccessful. He treated the native nobles with contumely, laughing at them and pulling their long beards; he kept an extravagant court, and he spent the pay of his troops on his private pleasures.\* His men deserted, and he was defeated several times by the King of Limerick. By December matters looked so bad that his father recalled him to England.

In the following year Henry's third son, Geoffrey of Brittany, died. Richard and John were thus the only survivors of the four brothers. But Geoffrey by his wife Constance, a sister of Philip of France, left a boy Arthur who now succeeded as Duke of Brittany and was a nearer heir to the English crown than John. Meanwhile John went with his father to Normandy and was given command of a division of the army in a campaign against the French. Richard, suspecting a design to oust him from the succession and nervous of his father's partiality for John, joined Philip; and soon afterwards John secretly came to terms with them. Together the brothers attacked and defeated their father; and in July 1189 Henry died, a victim to the treachery of his favourite child.

Richard now succeeded to the throne, and taking John to England loaded him with honours. Various counties and castles were given him, with a palatine jurisdiction that made him almost independent of the crown. At the coronation he took a leading place, and in August 1189 he married Isabella of Gloucester whose inheritance increased his power. But Richard was well aware of his brother's administrative incapacity and doubtful loyalty, so on starting for the crusade he made it a condition that John should not enter England for three years; and he left William Longchamp, who was

\* *Omnia proprio suo inclusit marsupio*, R. of Hoveden, ii. 305.



both Justiciar and Legate, to rule the kingdom in his absence.

John was now twenty-two. He had none of his brother's good looks or manners, but was short, dark and fat, with a shifty, lowering expression, sulky, sensual and indolent. His luck however had been remarkable, and he coveted more. Undoubtedly Richard regarded his nephew Arthur as his heir,\* but the laws of succession in Western Europe were still fluid and there was sufficient precedent for a prince of energy and capacity to put himself forward. John had neither of these qualities but he was ambitious, unscrupulous and scheming. He first prevailed on his mother, whose influence with Richard was paramount, to get him released from his oath not to enter England, and in 1191 he returned there. Longchamp was deficient in tact, and it was not difficult to start a party against him. After various disputes John forced him to an arbitration and compelled the Council to recognise himself as heir to the throne. Longchamp then fled abroad, and soon afterwards De Coutances, the Archbishop of Rouen, and William Marshal arrived in England with a commission from Richard to supersede him. A Council called by them ignored John's claims.

De Coutances became Justiciar with John in an indeterminate though powerful position. But Longchamp was still Papal Legate, and from Paris he excommunicated his opponents in England, accompanying his attacks however by a private offer of £700 to John to allow him to return. John accepted the bribe and then took £2,000 from the Council to expel him again. By now John had got possession of the Tower and the chief castles and was supported by the citizens of London and the more venal bishops and barons. But in 1192 Queen Eleanor arrived on the scene and she at once wrote to Syria to hurry Richard home. During his journey Richard was captured and imprisoned in Austria; and on getting this news Philip of France proposed to John a division of Richard's French dominions. The

\* He calls Arthur in a letter to the Pope, November 11th, 1190, *carissimum nepotem et heredem nostrum*, *Gesta Ric.* I, ii. 137.

Norman barons refused to agree, but John went to Paris, did homage for Normandy, Anjou and Aquitaine, gave up the Vexin to Philip, and swore to marry his sister Alais.\* Returning to England he called a Council at Windsor and stated that Richard was dead, "though no one believed it."† Public feeling was against him, and when he sent to France for mercenaries the Justiciar took his castles, until in 1193 he had to make peace.

Meanwhile the arrangements for Richard's release had advanced, and Philip wrote to John "to take care of himself as the devil was loosed."‡ Thereupon John fled to France and joined Philip in offering the Emperor 80,000 marks to keep Richard in prison—the money being that collected on John's lands for his brother's ransom. These proposals the Emperor communicated to Richard. As John had ordered his castellans in England to resist the royal officers he was then deprived of his possessions by the Council and excommunicated by the Legate.

Richard's arrival in England in March 1194 completed his brother's discomfiture. John's remaining strongholds were easily taken, and he was summoned to appear before the Council or forfeit his inheritance. He wisely went straight to Richard in Normandy, and Richard carelessly pardoned him and ordered him a good dinner—one of John's many weaknesses.

*Qu'avra il a mangier ?*

*Dist il*

*A ces mox li vint un saumon*

*A present . ce ne li peut nuire,*

*Ainsi le quemande a meïtre cuire*

*Hastivement a oes son frère.§*

The brothers were soon friends again, and within a year Richard gave John back some of his lands with an allowance of money. In return John took Evreux for him and signalised his victory by cutting off the heads of three

\* Rymer, *Fœdera*, i. 85.

† *Ibid.*, iii. 216.

‡ R. of Hoveden, iii. 204.

§ Guill. le Mar., 10414.

hundred of the garrison and sticking them upon the walls, a cruelty which even Richard condemned.

For the rest of Richard's reign John found it best to remain loyal and he gradually recovered his position : and on his deathbed on April 6th 1199 Richard it is said declared him his heir to the exclusion of his nephew Arthur of Brittany.

Directly he got news of Richard's death John posted from Normandy to Chinon, seized the royal treasure, and after attending his brother's funeral sent the Archbishop of Canterbury and William Marshal over to England to confirm his succession.

*Li Mar en Engleterre  
Enceia por saisir la terre  
E les chasteals et les citez \**

But the partisans of Arthur were not idle. The barons of Anjou and Touraine declared him their rightful prince : Tours and Angers were handed over to him : his mother, the Duchess Constance, marched with her Bretons to attack Normandy ; while Philip of France took over his guardianship and sent him for safety to Paris. At first John was equally active. He had himself invested with the sword of Normandy, recaptured Le Mans, left his mother to invade Anjou, and then crossed the Channel. In England there had been some hesitation about accepting him as King, but the influence of his envoys prevailed and he was crowned at Westminster on May 27th 1199. At the coronation it was observed that though he swore the oaths he did not communicate.

William Marshal was now made Earl of Pembroke while the great seal was given to Archbishop Hubert. After a short progress through the midlands John returned to Normandy, received the homage of Flanders and Brittany and then made peace with Philip. But the existence of his nephew Arthur made his position insecure, for although he had been married for ten years his wife had borne him no children. He now determined to divorce

\* Guill. le Mar., 11909.

her, though without resigning her estates.\* Three French bishops gave him the necessary release and in August 1200 he married another Isabella, daughter of Aymar, Count of Angoulême. She was a girl of fourteen, talented, beautiful and heiress of her father's lands, but she was already betrothed to Hugh de Lusignan, son of the Count de la Marche. John however persuaded her parents to let him carry her off, and in October he took her to England and was crowned again in her company. This marriage was generally regarded as impious, being between two divorced parties, and it became the source of many troubles.

*Ci commença l'achuison  
De la honte et de la guerre  
Dunt li reis perdi puis la terre †*

De Lusignan at once determined on vengeance. Aided by Constance of Brittany and Philip of France he started a war in Portou, and in May 1201 John had to take an army across the water. Almost at once the death of Constance reduced his opponents, but when he cited the Poictevin barons to appear before him they appealed to Philip. Philip, as John's suzerain, then summoned him to Paris and ordered him to give up his French fiefs to Arthur whom Philip had betrothed to his own daughter. To this command John paid no attention but remained at Rouen "eating splendid dinners with his beautiful wife and lying in bed until noon." Suddenly however he heard that his mother, now nearing eighty, was besieged at her castle of Mirabel in Poitou by Arthur and de Lusignan. This roused John and in forty-eight hours, riding night and day, he had surprised and defeated the besiegers, hemming them in between the castle walls and the donjon. In the fight he captured Arthur and his sister Eleanor, de Lusignan and his brother, with two hundred Poictevin knights, whom he carried off in carts, bound hand and foot,

\* His first wife married secondly Mandeville, Earl of Essex, and thirdly Hubert de Burgh, a notable hunter of heiresses.

† Guill. le Mar., 11998.

to England. Eleanor, 'the Rose of Brittany,' he imprisoned at Bristol and Arthur at Falaise, but de Lusignan, at his wife's request, he released.

Having thus got his principal rival into his power John had no intention of letting him go. For some months Arthur was kept in the custody of William de Braose. John tried to make him abandon his alliance with Philip, but the young prince was obstinate and would not compromise. John then sent him to a castle near Rouen where Hubert de Burgh was ordered to blind and castrate him. This was not done; but in April 1203 it seems that John rowed down to the fortress after dinner—"drunk and full of the devil"—killed Arthur himself and after tying a stone to the body threw it into the river.\* Rumours of the murder were soon noised about, and John's evil name grew. Philip with the Bretons and Poitevins invaded Normandy and captured several castles. But John had now become a slave to lust, sloth and food, and when the losses were reported to him he merely said "Let be, let be, what he takes I will get back in a day." During the summer he lost Château Gaillard and in December he returned to England. Three months later his mother died at Fontevraud: "Old but incomparable, beautiful and modest, humble and learned, indefatigable in labour, her endurance was the admiration of the age."† By her strength and sagacity she had long purged her youthful vagaries; the wife of two kings and the mother of three, the friend of a line of statesmen and crusaders, she had become the Sibyl of Europe, and her death removed the last restraint from her youngest son and the last tie that held together his empire.

John was quickly conscious of her loss. Arthur's murder had encouraged Philip to press his attacks on Normandy, and as John sent them no help his barons soon deserted. By the summer of 1204 the whole of the

\* *Post prandium, ebrius et demonio plenus, propria manu interfecit eum et grandi lapide corpus ejus alligato, projecit in Sequanam.* R. of Coggeshall, *Chronicon Anglicanum*, 140.

† R. of Devizes, 28.

duchy was in Philip's hands. John made a short and unsuccessful expedition to Anjou, but for the most part he stayed in England amusing himself, levying taxes, and bidding his castellans overseas protect themselves. In another two years Anjou, Maine and Touraine had been taken by the French and only the lands south of the Loire remained. At last John realised what was happening and "he became perturbed, very sad, crying and groaning and continually changing his plans." \* Archbishop Hubert, his strongest supporter, had died and the question of a successor was causing trouble. The Canterbury monks elected one candidate, John chose another, while the Pope nominated a third, Stephen Langton, whom he consecrated. John refused to receive Langton and seized the cathedral, whereupon Pope Innocent placed England under an interdict. John had sworn "by God's feet" that if it was promulgated he would drive every priest out of the land and would mutilate every papal messenger † but he now began to temporise. He was managing the government himself, for Marshal disgusted at his conduct had gone off to his estates in Ireland, while Fitzpeter, the Justiciar, pandered to his vices and was disliked by the barons.

In 1207 and 1208 John's two sons were born, the future Henry III and Richard of Cornwall. His dynasty thus seemed safe, but the interdict weighed heavily on his people. Baptism and extreme unction were the only sacraments allowed, all the churches were closed and gloom lay over the land. John however remained sneering and sullen, visiting his displeasure on the clergy, destroying their property and loading them with fines. In consequence they hated him, and he was equally loathed by the nobility. He had always been a sensualist and as the attractions of his young wife wore off he had returned with avidity to his old pursuits, debauching the daughters and violating the wives of his subjects, and boasting of his intentions and exploits. "*Fust home santz conscience, mavors, contrarious, et hay*

\* R. of Coggeshall, 152 etc.

† Matthew Paris, 226.

*de tote bone gent, e lecherous ; e, syl poeit oyr de belle dame ou demoiselle, femme ou fyl de counte ou de barun e dautre, yl la voleyt a sa volenté aver, ou, par promesse ou par don, engyner, ou par force ravyr. E pur ce, fust le plus hay."* \*

In 1210 he took an expedition to Ireland, where he wished to break the power of de Lacey his deputy and to capture William de Braose who had been Arthur's keeper in France. Both had served him well: both were to pay for their loyalty. He was partly successful. He reduced Carrickfergus, strengthened his Irish garrisons and drove out de Lacey. De Braose escaped, but John caught his wife and son. The former had offended him by refusing to give up her child as a hostage, saying that she would not trust him to a man who had murdered his nephew. John confined the two in a dungeon at Windsor where he left them to starve with a sheaf of oats and a lump of raw bacon. Some weeks later they were found dead, side by side, the mother having gnawed away her son's flesh.

On his return to England John increased the taxes on the Church and arrested all the Jews, fining them 60,000 marks: the head rabbi of Bristol was encouraged to pay by having a tooth knocked out every day. Unpopular as the Jews were, these extortions enlisted sympathy for them, though it did not make John moderate his methods. In 1211 he marched against Llewellyn of Wales, who had married one of his natural daughters, and took as hostages twenty-eight sons of Welsh chieftains. A year later news of a fresh rising was brought him as he was going to dinner and before he sat down he had them all hanged. "But as he sat at table intent on his meat and drink, letters came from Scotland and Wales telling of fresh plots against his life, at which he was much terrified." †

A still more serious danger soon assailed him. Pope Innocent had tired of his contumacy and oppression. Ignorant of fear, for he had already excommunicated the

\* Fulk Fitzwarren, R. of Coggeshall, 355.

† Matthew Paris, 237.

Emperor, he now launched a similar decree against John, releasing his subjects from their allegiance and commissioning the King of France to execute the sentence. This really frightened John though for a time he kept up his old attitude, robbing the rich and oppressing the poor. The Archdeacon of Norwich he extinguished under a cope of lead for saying that he would not work for an excommunicated master ; while a hermit who had prophesied that the King would be dead in a year, he kept in prison for that period and then hanged with his son. But gradually his dangers disturbed him : for five years he had braved and derided the anger of God ; he now determined to submit.

In May 1213 he met the Papal Legate at Dover and agreed to Innocent's demands. He acknowledged Archbishop Langton, received back the exiled bishops, and compensated the monks he had expelled. He also did homage for his kingdom, placing it under the Pope's suzerainty with the promise of an annual tribute of a thousand gold marks. He was then absolved by the archbishop, lying on the ground and weeping.\* Meanwhile the English fleet had defeated a French squadron at Damme, taking and burning a large number of ships. Encouraged by this victory John summoned his barons to join him in an expedition to recover Portou, and when they refused he marched north to punish them. But the arrival of Langton had given them a leader, and during John's absence a Great Council was called in London where the new archbishop produced Henry I's charter and encouraged them to insist on its renewal. This began the movement which led to Magna Charta.

In October the Justiciar died. With Archbishop Hubert he had been John's staunchest friend and of him alone perhaps was John afraid : but on hearing of his death John laughed and said " When he enters hell let him salute Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, whom no doubt he will find there. By God's feet, now for the first time am I King and Lord of England." †

\* *Cecidit pronus in terra ad pedes eorum, lacrimis profusus.* Matthew Paris, 239.

† *Ibid.*, 243, 244.



Peter de Roches, Bishop of Winchester, was now made Justiciar: he was a Poietevin, and his appointment displeased the barons who went on pressing for reforms in the government. John raged at them and at times seemed demented. "He used to rave about questions of faith, doubting the resurrection and blaspheming terribly," and at this time he is said to have sent an embassy to one of the Mahometan emirs of Spain requesting his alliance and offering to embrace his faith. The emir however refused his proposals "not wishing to make a treaty with a King who was old and weak and who wished to change the religion in which he had been born." When he asked for a description of John the envoys said "He is rather a tyrant than a King; a destroyer rather than a ruler, an oppressor of his own and a cheater of others; a lion to his subjects, a lamb to foreigners and rebels. He has lost his duchy of Normandy and seeks to lose or destroy his kingdom of England: he is an insatiable extorter of money, the father of few or rather of no strong children. He has a wife whom he hates and who hates him, incestuous, wicked, adulterous and often caught. He is always violating the daughters of the nobles and the nuns. About religion he is uncertain and divided." \*

John was still hoping for a success in France in order to retrieve his position in England. His wife had just inherited the county of Angoulême, and the moment seemed auspicious for a campaign. Assembling a fleet and collecting some mercenaries in place of his nobles he sailed in February 1214 for La Rochelle, taking with him the Queen, his son Richard and his niece Eleanor of Brittany, "with an inestimable treasure of gold, silver and precious stones." † But the venture was unfortunate. He captured some towns in Poitou and advanced towards Angers but had then to retreat from the French. In July his nephew, the Emperor Otto, was defeated by Philip at Bouvines; and in September John had to accept the French terms and to pay an indemnity of

\* Matthew Paris, 244.

† R. of Coggeshall, 168.

60,000 marks. "After being reconciled to God" he said "and submitting shamefully to the Church, everything goes wrong." \* A month later he returned to England.

During his absence in France the barons had again combined and had fixed on the concessions they required—"to restore the liberty of the Church and the Kingdom, to abolish the evil customs which his father, his brother and himself had introduced, and to renew Henry I's charter." † At first John flatly refused, but in January 1215 the barons met him in arms at the Temple in London and repeated their demands. He put them off until Easter, pledging the archbishop and Marshal that he would then agree. In March, to place himself doubly under the protection of the Church, he took the cross. In April the barons held a further meeting at Northampton and sent him a fresh list of their claims which he again specifically refused: "Why do they not ask for the kingdom" he said. They then formally renounced their allegiance, armed their retainers, and marched on London, while John fled to Wiltshire. Within a few weeks the barons had raised four divisions of troops, all the nobles joining except six earls. Among their leaders were de Mandeville, who had married John's former wife, de Vesci, whose wife he had tried to seduce, Fitzwalter, whose daughter he had poisoned, and de Braose, whose family he had murdered. Matters became so serious that in June John returned to Windsor, and on the 15th of that month he met twenty-five of the leading barons in a field near Runnymede and there he signed the Great Charter. He then began rapid marches through the country, keeping chiefly to the south coast and storing his treasure on ships. "He was constantly raging, biting and tearing his nails, muttering and gnashing his teeth, cursing his father and mother, raving and saying that he had twenty-five kings set over him." ‡

He had little intention however of keeping his promises.

\* Matthew Paris, 252.

† R. of Coggeshall, 170.

‡ Matthew Paris, 264.

He petitioned Philip and the Pope for help and largely increased his mercenaries. Pandulf the Legate stuck to him and excommunicated the barons, until the latter divided, one party joining John, while the rest invited Philip to come over and assume the English crown. This Philip refused but he let his son Louis take an army to England, and in October 1215 war began.

John secured Rochester and then marched to Berwick ravaging the country. By March 1216 he was back at Colchester and in April he went to Dover to intercept the French. Meanwhile Louis had landed in Thanet, and John had to retreat to Winchester. During the summer he hung about the west of England, destroying, pillaging, and losing his remaining friends. Moving through Dorset, Worcester, Oxford, Cambridge and Lincoln he came to Lynn, and on leaving that place he lost all his baggage while crossing the Welland. Much upset by this and by the harassing life he had been leading for eighteen months he fell ill from dysentery at Swineshead. One story says that he overate of cider and peaches, another that he was poisoned by a monk whose sister he had tried to violate: both tales may be true. He was carried in a litter to Newark Castle and there on October 19th 1216, he died. His last hours were passed in writing to the Pope, recommending his children to his care, and in bidding his attendants place everything in the hands of William Marshal, the only great lord who was still his friend. At the time of his death John had lost half his dominions and was not the effective ruler of any of them: "*Ledit Jean*," says a French chronicler, "*fut nommé de son jeune âge Jean Sans terre: il fut après Roy d'Angleterre, Duc d'Aquitaine et de Normandie, et puis perdit tout.*" \*

John was buried before the high altar in Worcester Cathedral where there is a later effigy of him. He had lived forty-eight years and reigned seventeen and a half. By his second wife he left two sons, Henry III who succeeded him and Richard, Earl of Cornwall, afterwards

\* *Annales d'Aquitaine*, 165.

King of the Romans; with three daughters, Joan, wife of Alexander, King of Scots, Isabella, wife of the Emperor Frederic II, and Eleanor, who married first William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke and secondly Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester. He had also a number of illegitimate children, among them Joan, wife of Llewellyn of Wales, Godfrey, Richard and Oliver. His young widow returned to France where she married her former flame de Lusignan, and after a chequered career, which included an accusation of attempting to poison the King of France, she died in a nunnery in 1246.

John's personality was unattractive. He had aged early and at forty had a projecting stomach and grey hair. Sport, food, wine, women and clothes were his only real interests and he was held to be the greatest fop in Europe; at one of his festivals he wore "a red satin mantle embroidered with sapphires and pearls, a tunic of white damask, and gloves set with jewels." \* Like all his family he was devoted to hunting, fishing and hawking, and de Born attributed his bad government to an excessive love for the chase.† It is doubtful if he had any literary tastes, though there is a record in the Close Rolls of his sending for the Romance of the History of England, and he possessed an Ælian and a Pliny.‡ As a soldier he had some courage and capacity, though they were marred by indolence and indecision. In religion he was a pure opportunist. He rejoiced in holding up the Church to derision, 'calling every priest an enemy': once when a buck was shot down before him he said "What a lucky animal, he has never heard mass and never will." His usual oaths were "God's legs" or "God's feet." Yet he never stirred on an expedition without hanging images round his neck and he always atoned for eating meat on a fast day by giving doles to the poor. During his last meal he boasted that he would treble the price of bread all over England.

He was a great dissembler, dark, secret and suspicious. He was also shameless, coarse and cruel, though on

\* Strickland, i. 342.

† Davis, 389.

‡ Strickland, ii. 338.

occasion his vaunting lapsed into cowardice : he grovelled before Richard and Langton and when he fled in battle he did so "howling and weeping" (*flens et ejulans*). But his amatory adventures epitomise his worst characteristics. He was anxious to seduce the wife of Eustace de Vesci, so one day when dining with him in London he admired and asked for the loan of his ring, 'to get it copied,' he said. This ring he sent to the lady, who was in the country, with a message from her husband that he was dying and wished her to come to him at once. But while posting to London she met her husband, and on learning of the trick he bade her agree to an appointment with the King. He then engaged a prostitute to personate her, and John fell headlong into the trap. Meeting de Vesci next morning he said, "Your wife is very pleasant in the silence of night": "Why so, Sir?" asked de Vesci: "Oh," replied the King, "I speak from experience." When de Vesci told him the truth John in a rage tried to kill him; but the baron escaped, spread the tale among his friends, and did the King irreparable damage.

Of John's first wife little is known; but Isabella of Angoulême seems soon to have acquired his vices. Her husband however did not tolerate infidelity in others and having hanged two of her lovers over her bed he led her in to see them. He loved to turn his own intrigues or those of others to account. One record notes that "Robert de Vaux gave five of his best palfreys that the King might hold his tongue about Pinel's wife;" another that "a tun of wine is sent to the Bishop of Winchester for not reminding the King to give the Countess of Albemarle a girdle."\* With all his gallantries John had no social virtues: his temper was quarrelsome and he was an unpleasant companion. De Barri says that "there was more gall in his ingratitude than in that of his brothers, that he was worse in the moroseness of his disposition and the depravity of his conduct, and that he eclipsed all vicious men in his enormities."†

\* Giraldus Camb., xi. xxviii.

† Strickland, i. 343.

John's mentality is not difficult to discern. The youngest child, the Cinderella and pet of his family, he saw little of his mother but only too much of his father, his father's mistresses, and their domestic dissensions, learning as a child all the lessons of debauchery and deceit. As a youth he gave unmistakable signs of instability and greed: too much of a gambler to wait for fortune, he never stuck at treachery and when found out no ignominy shamed him. His only object was his own aggrandisement and comfort, and such aims increased his incapacity as a ruler. His father had been a great King, his brother a famous leader, and their virtues partly counterbalanced their faults. But John had only vices, and vices which were peculiarly distasteful to his powerful bishops and barons. He had almost a genius for gluttony, cruelty and lust, and the consensus of history as to his character is probably correct. Yet he could occasionally shew spirit and skill. He rescued his mother at Mirabel with surprising vigour. He subdued Ireland effectively. He secured the Pope's aid at a dangerous crisis and built up an ingenious league of the Empire and Flanders against France. But all his successes were ruined by his tyranny, his folly and the odium he had justly earned. 'False, selfish and made to be hated he had pertinacity and tactics without strategy or foresight.'\* Walter of Coventry calls him "A great prince but unlucky: munificent to foreigners but a despoiler of his own people, confiding more in aliens than in his subjects."† "He was fit neither for prosperity nor adversity—the former rendering him extremely insolent, the latter surprisingly dejected."‡

A lover of ease and idleness, destitute of all kingly qualities, it is not strange that John's career followed the course it did: in those days a ruler who was both weak and evil did not keep his possessions long. But though as a prince and a man he was equally bad, his reign was beneficial to his country. The loss of the foreign provinces kept the best barons in England and taught them

\* Trevelyan, 168. † W. of Coventry, ii. 232. ‡ Rapin, i. 280.

to make it their home ; the concessions bought by the towns developed their trade ; while the public and private wrongs wrought by the King roused his people to wrench from him a charter of freedom which he did not live to disown. The last of the really foreign princes, the most degenerate and despotic of the Plantagenets, perhaps England's worst ruler, he yet laid the basis of her free constitution.







### HENRY III

From a drawing by Professor Frisdrum of a painting in Westminster Abbey  
By kind permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum

## HENRY III

1207-1272

HENRY III, surnamed of Winchester, was born in that city on October 1st 1207, the eldest son of King John by Isabella of Angoulême. At the age of two he was acknowledged heir apparent to the crown, the barons swearing allegiance to him. A weakly, small and backward child he was brought up in England with his younger brother Richard, at first at his mother's court and after her licentious conduct had incurred John's displeasure, by his governor, Ralph de St. Sanson, at Marlborough, Savernake and Windsor.

On October 19th 1216 John died at Newark, execrated, powerless and poor. Henry was at Devizes Castle well guarded, for the country was in the throes of civil war, the royalist party was reduced and Prince Louis of France supported by many of the English barons was holding London and the eastern counties. But the death of John removed the chief cause of complaint; his infant son had no share in his iniquities and no power to repeat them. William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, the trusted counsellor of three Kings, had stuck firmly to John through all his troubles and with Gualo, the Papal Legate, he now threw all his influence on Henry's side. He went to bring him from Devizes to Gloucester "and when they met on the road and Marshal saluted him, the child, riding in the arms of his governor, replied as he had been taught"

*"Sire bien veignez  
Itant vos di certainement  
Que a Dieu et a vos me rent." \**

\* Guill. le Mar., 15267.

Amid the tears of the company Marshal reaffirmed his loyalty

*La reis plora et cil ploient  
De pitie qui entor lui erent.*

At Gloucester on October 28th Henry was crowned, the ceremony being performed in the absence of the Primate by Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester. As the regalia had been lost a crown was supplied by a golden collar of the Queen's, and Henry was knighted by Marshal.

*Vestuz des petiz dias realz  
Chivalier fut petiz e bealz.*

After doing homage to the Legate for his kingdom and receiving that of his nobles, he was carried to the banquet.

Gualo now excommunicated Louis and the rebels, and this move soon brought bishops and barons to his side.\* A fortnight after the coronation a Great Council met at Bristol where Marshal was chosen *Rector Regis et Regni*, his assistants being Gualo and Peter des Roches. To the Queen no share was given in the administration, and shortly afterwards she left England for Angoulême where for twenty years she went on doing mischief.

Henry and his court removed to Oxford. The wise policy of the old Regent rapidly increased his adherents, while the French lost strength. In May 1217 they were defeated at Lincoln and in August their fleet was shattered off Dover by the Justiciar Hubert de Burgh. In September a treaty was signed with Louis who then left England with an indemnity, and by Christmas the land was quiet.

Early in the following year Marshal died begging the boy King to be a good man—*que produm sciez*. Gualo was replaced by Cardinal Pandulf, and the government devolved on Peter des Roches and Hubert de Burgh. Peace was made with France, and in 1220 Henry was crowned again, this time by the Archbishop of Canterbury

\* *Mandans et monans, rogans et obsecrans, arguens et increpans, in contradicentes vel inobedientes gladium Petri exerens.* W. of Coventry, ii 233.

at Westminster, where he laid the foundation stone of the new abbey that was to be his life's work. His mother had now married Hugh de Lusignan, but Henry's ministers refused to restore her dowry: his new relations were to make him pay it tenfold.

The young King moved about among his manors, travelling with his court and his tutor Philip of Albi. His education fell entirely into the hands of the priests who soon gained control of his mind, for he loved sacred ceremonies. In 1222 he was at Canterbury for the translation of the body of St. Thomas and in the following year at York for the wedding of his sister Joan to Alexander II of Scotland. On this occasion Hubert de Burgh took as his third wife the Lady Margaret, sister of the Scottish King, a match that was regarded as presumptuous. He and Archbishop Langton were having difficulty in maintaining a national government, for the influence of the Poitevin Bishop of Winchester, the Norman Earl of Chester and the Italian Papal Legate was backed by John's former mercenaries. Gradually however the royal castles were resumed, and at Langton's request the Legate was recalled and the Bishop of Winchester sent on a pilgrimage. But there remained a considerable foreign party, especially in London, and Henry himself liked them.

As he was given more independence Henry began to assert himself. When the archbishop asked him at a Council to confirm the charters granted by his father, one of the courtiers said "They were extorted by force and ought not to be observed." The archbishop replied, "If you love the King you will not hinder the kingdom's peace," and Henry, seeing his anger, said "We have sworn to all these liberties and we are bound to them and will keep the oaths we have sworn." \* Three months later the Pope pronounced him of fit age to govern: he was then just sixteen.

Early in 1224 the French attacked Poitou and Gascony, taking many towns. An expedition was despatched to

\* R. of Wendover, ii. 269.

relieve them, and as Henry could not go abroad himself he sent in his place his brother Richard, Earl of Cornwall. The force was led by his uncle the Earl of Salisbury and his old tutor Philip of Albini, and it was so successful that Henry wished to join it but he was prevented by illness.

In January 1227 Henry declared himself of age. He had grown up short, dark and ungainly, his expression marred by a drooping eyelid. Though muscularly strong his constitution was weak, and unlike most of his family he took little interest in sport or women, though he was something of a troubadour: he was nervous, irascible and very devout. His first act, with de Burgh's approval, was again to get rid of des Roches whom he sent on a crusade. He next revoked all grants made during his minority, taking fines for their renewal. This caused intense irritation among the nobility, and Richard of Cornwall hearing that one of his manors was to be seized "offered to stand by the judgment of the King's Court and the barons. The King and the Justiciar hearing the word 'barons' were very angry, and the King loudly and indiscreetly ordered his brother to give up the manor at once or leave England." This Richard refused to do except by the sentence of his peers, and a serious quarrel arose between the brothers: until Richard went off to Reading with a number of earls and the King was forced to agree.

Archbishop Langton had died and de Burgh was now in supreme control; but the failure of a Welsh expedition which he had advised and the expense of defending one of his castles, called 'Hubert's Folly,' had lessened his influence. When the Gaseons wrote from Aquitaine asking Henry to come to their aid against the French "the King, who was perplexed and excessively simple, could get no advice from the Justiciar, his only counsellor, except to wait until matters looked better." \* Henry, longing for military fame, took the matter into his own hands and assembled some troops at Portsmouth; but when they were to embark there were not enough transports. "For this he threw the whole blame on the

\* R. of Wendover, ii. 356.

Justiciar, "calling him an old traitor who had done it for 5,000 marks given him by the Queen of France, and then, drawing his sword, made as if to kill him," \* until he was stopped by the Earl of Chester.

In 1230 Henry at last had his wish. Sailing with an army to Bordeaux he spent the summer marching about Gascony, taking castles and receiving homage. But his stays in the towns were expensive, "the earls and barons giving each other dinners after the English manner, drinking healths and spending all they had, money, horses and arms, so that for the rest of their lives they were unhappy." † When they returned to England heavy taxes had to be levied, the blame for which fell on Henry and his minister. The Bishop of Winchester, who was back again, renewed his opposition to de Burgh, while the Earl of Chester, the most powerful of the nobles, took the same side. In 1232 there were riots against the exactions of the papal agents, and for these de Burgh was blamed. Henry's pride and piety were deeply offended at the Pope's servants being attacked, and egged on by the bishop he suddenly dismissed de Burgh who had been Justiciar for fifteen years.

For months Henry now pursued and persecuted his old minister, seizing him in churches, confining him in castles, and confiscating his property, while the Bishop of Winchester filled the offices of state with Frenchmen. This so vexed the barons that they boycotted the court and disregarded the royal commands. The prelates sided with them, and at last Henry was forced to pardon de Burgh and dismiss his foreign counsellors.

In 1235 Henry's sister Isabella was married to the Emperor Frederic II who sent him in return three leopards. ‡ Henry himself was singularly chaste but at twenty-eight he had become anxious for an heir. Successive proposals to the Dukes of Brittany and Austria and to the Kings of Bohemia and Scotland for their daughters' hands had been met by various objections, so a less ambitious offer was now made for Eleanor, child of

\* R. of Wendover, ii. 379.

† *Ibid.*, iii. 7.

‡ They were lodged in the Tower.

Raymond Berenger IV, Count of Provence, and sister of the French Queen. It was of them that Dante wrote

*Quattro figlie ebbe e ciascuna rena  
Ramondo Berlinghiera.*<sup>1</sup>

Though only fourteen and almost penniless Eleanor was clever and good looking, and Henry had set his heart on her: he ordered his envoys to forego any dowry if necessary and this carried the day. In January 1236 Eleanor arrived in England with an immense following of jongleurs, cooks, artists and actors, and a string of brothers and uncles. The marriage took place at Canterbury and a week later the Queen was crowned. "The streets were swept clean and decorated with tapestries; banners, crosses, poles and candles were set up, the citizens of London rode on fast horses accompanied by bands of music, and the ceremony was followed by a banquet with abundance of game, variety of fish and amusing and attractive servants."†

The King at once fell under the sway of William de Valence, one of his wife's uncles. More poor relatives of the new Queen were brought over to England, and Henry showered gifts and heiresses on them, until the Provençals displaced the Poitevins. There was in Henry's character something of his mother's temperament blended with the weakness and passion of his father, and though his religious upbringing and his health kept him from lechery or bloodshed he was reckless when tempted by pleasure or power. His admiration for the arts and luxuries of France, his ambition for foreign or domestic dominion and his inability to manage money soon combined to destroy his credit and damage his position.

Meanwhile another foreigner of a very different stamp had appeared. This was Simon de Montfort who was destined to be Henry's fiercest foe. Born a Frenchman he had inherited through an English grandmother the earldom of Leicester, which he had come to England to

\* Paradiso, vi. 133.

† Matthew Paris, 421.

obtain. There he had won the heart of Henry's sister Eleanor and in 1238 he married her, though the alliance offended both King and barons. In the following year the Queen had a son and at her churching Henry suddenly accused his brother-in-law, whom he had just named a godfather, of having seduced his sister. Such a statement at such a time caused so public a scandal that de Montfort and his wife were forced to flee to France.

Soon after this de Valence died. Henry was so grieved "that he tore up his clothes and threw them into the fire," \* but he quickly replaced his friend by three other of his wife's uncles, Thomas who built the Savoy Palace, Boniface, who was made Archbishop of Canterbury and who used to knock his abbots down, and Peter, who became Earl of Richmond. The government was entirely in the hands of aliens, the English nobles being excluded, for Richard of Cornwall had gone to a crusade and they were without a leader. The court lived in the utmost profusion, taxes were raised without right or reason "and the King changed his decisions from day to day, quarrelling with his relations and raging against his most powerful subjects." †

A fresh cause of trouble now arose. The Gascons had long complained of their oppression by the French. De Lusignan, Henry's stepfather, a needy and avaricious man, urged him to support them with an army and promised him the help of the Poitevins. The Great Council however opposed this scheme "until Henry called them into his own room one by one, like a priest summoning his penitents to confession, and by lying arguments and disingenuous appeals induced them to agree." ‡ In May 1242 he again sailed for Bordeaux where de Lusignan was to join him. He was accompanied by his brother Richard, seven earls and three hundred knights, as well as by the Queen who was expecting her confinement, an event on which the campaign's time table turned. From the start the expedition was unfortunate. As Louis advanced against him Henry's French

\* Matthew Paris, 517.

† *Ibid.*, 572.

‡ *Ibid.*, 580.



followers deserted, until at Taillebourg he found himself faced by a greatly superior force. He reproached his stepfather for bringing him to such a pass, but de Lusignan "with horrible oaths" put all the blame on his wife. Earl Richard, seeing the danger of being surrounded, then "unarmed himself and taking only a staff went and asked Louis for an armistice of twenty-four hours." \* His request was granted "for he was popular with the French and the day was Sunday." During the night the English retired on Saintes and Bordeaux; but at dawn the French pursued, and in the fighting Henry was so rash that de Montfort only just saved him from capture, saying that he ought to be shut up at Windsor—a remark which Henry never forgave. After the battle de Lusignan deserted and made his own peace with Louis.

At Bordeaux Henry remained for a year. "Deluded and defrauded he had sunk into such poverty and ignominy that despite the heavy taxes he levied he was tied to Gascony by his debts." † Not until October 1243 did he return to England, having wasted an enormous treasure and secured neither victory nor prestige; but he brought with him several of his de Lusignan half-brothers whom he at once provided with lands and sinecures in England.

Henry's financial position was now serious. Besides his payments abroad, his grants to friends and the cost of his court, he was spending large sums on rebuilding Westminster Abbey and endowing other churches. His debts rose to nearly a million marks ‡ and in 1244 he was obliged to appeal to the Council. But they would only grant an aid in return for definite concessions—a check on the appointment of ministers and a committee to supervise the government. Richard of Cornwall, Bishop Grosseteste of Lincoln and Simon de Montfort took the lead in these demands; but though Henry refused them he was given some money. His most pressing need however was to reorganise Gascony, the state of which had become so bad that a strong governor

\* Matthew Paris, 591.

† *Ibid.*, 597.

‡ Stubbs, *Const. Hist.*, ii. 77.

was imperative. De Montfort who knew the country had great capacity, and Henry was anxious to get rid of him; so in 1248 the earl was sent out, and his firm administration gradually restored order. But in England matters grew worse. The Commons were fleeced, subsidies were paid to Rome and English estates were granted to aliens. The London merchants, the clergy and the Jews suffered most, for the King's importunity never ceased. When the Council protested he had always an excuse. In 1250 he found a new cure for his debts. Assembling the Londoners in the Great Hall at Westminster 'so that it was packed to overflowing' he begged their forgiveness for his exactions, promised them restitution and then publicly took the cross as a pilgrim. "Sinister interpreters" says Matthew Paris "asserted that he did this to extort more money; discreeter men reserved their judgment." \*

Already de Montfort was asking for funds to carry on his government; but as none were sent him the Gascons, disliking his strict rule, sent to London to impeach him. De Montfort returned to meet their charges, and when Henry abused him he retorted that the King had not kept his promises. Henry answered that he disdained to keep faith with a traitor, and de Montfort then called him a liar, saying that he was no Christian, for he confessed but never repented. Henry replied, "I have never repented of anything more than letting you enter England." † After such a quarrel peace was impossible, and for the rest of their lives the brothers-in-law were sworn foes. De Montfort went back for a time to Gascony, where his reputation was so high that he was offered the regency of France during the absence of St. Louis at the Sixth Crusade; but he refused to leave the service of his adopted country. His departure from his government was the signal for fresh revolts, until Henry determined to go out himself. To get the necessary money he was compelled to swear to the Charter, which he had often done before; but on this occasion the act was made

\* Matthew Paris, 774.

† *Ibid.*, 837.

a religious ceremony, as more likely to bind him, "though he refused to hold a candle and kept his hand open on his breast." In May 1253 he sailed from Portsmouth and spent another eighteen months in France, during which time his son Edward, a lad of fifteen, joined him and was married to Eleanor of Castile. As on the former occasion no real successes were gained, though numerous villages were sacked and burnt. On his way home Henry paid a visit to his brother-in-law St. Louis in Paris where he was greeted by the whole populace "and especially by the scholars, most of whom were English." \* The two Kings entertained each other at a round of banquets, and Henry, who had a real love for art, spent much of his time in the *Sainte Chapelle* 'which he would have liked to carry off in a cart.' †

Early in 1255 he was back in England asking for more money. Again the Council refused except on the old terms, so Henry sent for the Jews; but they only begged to leave the country. "Alas" said Henry "it is terrible to think of my debts! By God's head I owe 300,000 marks. I am a mutilated and diminished King but I must get money for I must live." ‡ His brother Richard, who had recently married the Queen's sister Sancia, lent him enough for present needs; but hardly had the situation been saved when the Pope, who with the Poitevins and the Provençals regarded Henry as fair game, offered him the crown of Sicily for his second son. This barren title Henry accepted without consulting his Council, and pledged his credit to carry on a papal war. But the barons bluntly refused to touch the business, the Bishop of London saying that if his mitre was taken away he still had his helmet, while the Earl of Norfolk told Henry that were the royal reapers to come on to his lands he would send him back their heads.

In 1257 Richard of Cornwall was elected King of the Romans, "an honour due to his sagacity and riches" principally the latter. His departure for Germany deprived Henry of his most generous counsellor and the barons of their wisest leader. Immediately afterwards

\* Matthew Paris, 899. † Borenus, 10. ‡ *Ibid.*, 902.

Henry was defeated in an expedition to Wales, his favourite daughter died, and he and the Queen fell ill.

In June 1258 the 'Mad Parliament' met at Oxford, the barons coming to it armed. Led by de Montfort, de Clare and Bigod, the Earls of Leicester, Gloucester and Norfolk, they forced Henry to grant some reforms.\* Their plan was to control the kingdom by a committee of twenty-four, half chosen by Henry and half by themselves: it was to select the ministers and hold the royal castles, while a Parliament was to meet it thrice a year: but no more innovations were to be made—*nolumus leges Angliæ mutari*. As usual Henry swore to keep his promises, and the Provisions of Oxford were issued in English, one of the first state documents in the native tongue. Norfolk was made Justiciar, some castles were restored to the Council and some Poitevins left England. In August Henry was caught on the Thames by a thunder-storm, a thing he greatly feared, so he had his barge rowed to the Bishop of Durham's palace. De Montfort, who was staying there, came to the steps to greet him, saying "What is there to be afraid of, Sir, the storm is almost gone." Henry answered sternly "I fear thunder and lightning excessively but by God's head I fear you more."†

Determined to retrieve his defeat, Henry went again to Paris to consult Louis and there he resigned the duchy of Normandy in return for a subsidy. While he was away the Council sat regularly in England, and for a time he adhered to his engagements. In a letter to the Pope he refuses to allow one of his half-brothers to return to England "as his absence is for the good of the country"; ‡ though in another to his court painter he directs a room in the palace to

\* *O comes Gloverniæ comple quod cœpisti  
Nisi claudas congrue, multos decepisti,  
Et tu comes le Bigot pactum serva sanum  
Cum sis miles strenuus nunc exerce manum.*

Political Songs, 121.

‡ Matthew Paris, 974.

† Hen. III, Royal Letters, ii. 150.

be painted "with the picture of a King being rescued from his subjects by his dogs."\*

The barons' government was not doing well, for there were jealousies between de Montfort and de Clare, one leading the popular and the other the aristocratic party. Of these divisions Henry took advantage; and his son Edward, who had hitherto sympathised with his godfather de Montfort, now joined his father and brought de Clare over with him. Henry secured the Tower of London and the castles of Winchester, Windsor and Dover, and strengthened their defences. Then in June 1261 he suddenly announced that he had received from the Pope a dispensation from all his oaths, and he categorically repudiated the Provisions of Oxford.† But this coup reunited de Montfort and de Clare, and they called a Parliament without the King's authority. Henry countered them by summoning the knights of the shire to Windsor. De Clare then again deserted the barons, and de Montfort in despair departed to France.

In the following year Henry went back to Paris where he caught a fever and lay dangerously ill. On his recovery he met de Montfort, and attempts were made to settle their disputes which related not only to public policy but also to their private finances—Henry's debts and Eleanor's dowry—but no settlement was reached. On returning to England at Christmas Henry found de Clare dead and his successor, the new Earl of Gloucester, allied with de Montfort who was home again. By this time both King and Queen were so unpopular that when the latter was being rowed in her barge from the Tower to Windsor she was pelted with stones and rotten eggs from London Bridge and called an adulteress, a harlot and a witch.‡

The barons were now organised, and at Whitsuntide 1263 the Great Council formally required Henry to endorse his promises and confirm the Charter. He refused and took up his quarters in the Tower, while Prince Edward fortified himself at Windsor. A civil war then began. The barons already controlled the west; they soon took Oxford,

\* Strickland, i. 392.

† Rymer, i. 736.

‡ T. Wikes, 57.

Guildford and Dover, and in July they entered London. Henry then left the Tower and crossed to Boulogne to meet Louis and de Montfort: but three weeks later he returned, and after vainly attempting to recover some of his castles he agreed to accept the arbitration of Louis. His plan succeeded, for at Amiens in January 1264 Louis disallowed the Provisions of Oxford and restored to Henry all his former power. Encouraged by this award Henry embarked on a fresh campaign. With a considerable army he took several towns in the midlands and then marched on the Channel ports where he proposed landing foreign troops. At Tunbridge he captured the Countess of Gloucester, but released her saying that he did not make war on ladies, a gallantry which seems to have disturbed the Queen. On May 12th he came to Lewes where the barons' army was drawn up. Efforts at negotiations were made, but neither side would draw back; so Henry formally renounced the allegiance of de Montfort and his rebel lords with the words "*Symon, jeo vous defie!*"\* In the battle which followed, through Prince Edward's reckless pursuit of the Londoners, the royal troops were defeated, and Henry with his son and brother was taken prisoner. His three de Lusignan half-brothers fled from the field, but he himself fought courageously until his horse was killed, when he surrendered to de Montfort. For the next fifteen months he was a King only in name.

De Montfort returned to London with Henry in his train, and yet another scheme of government was set up. Under its auspices in January 1265 the first Parliament met at Westminster: it included not only prelates and barons but also burgesses and knights of the shire. But it did little. With de Montfort's victory his allies began to fall away, for the royalist tradition was strong and few of the nobles cared to let one of themselves rule. De Clare led Henry's party, while the Pope, regarding the King as his vassal, excommunicated his opponents as he had done fifty years before. In the

\* P. Langtoft, i. 217.

summer Prince Edward escaped from Hereford castle and rallied the royalists. De Montfort who was beyond the Severn struck east to prevent him joining de Clare, but on August 4th he was caught between their two armies at Evesham and was defeated and slain. In the battle Henry, who was with him, was wounded and in some danger; but he saved himself by calling out "I am Henry of Winchester, your King; do not kill me." \*

The death of de Montfort relieved Henry from a terror and an oppression which had lasted over twenty years. The estates of the rebel lords were confiscated, and for many months Prince Edward pursued and reduced them in detail. In a Parliament at Marlborough Henry then granted nearly all the old demands, for his despotic ideas had diminished; and a firmer form of government gradually emerged. His own control of affairs had virtually ceased, for he had been shattered by his experiences in the war, and he was now content to live quietly and to concern himself only with his religious pleasures. In 1269 he saw his life's work at Westminster almost finished and he attended the translation of the Confessor's body, carrying the relics on his shoulders.† A year later the country had become so quiet that Prince Edward was able to go to the Crusade.

In the following winter Henry fell dangerously ill, but he recovered and again took the cross, saying "*La signe de la seynt croys par nostre propre volenté e en pur devocien avouns repris.*" ‡ Early in 1272 his brother Richard died, and ten months later, on November 16th 1272, Henry himself passed away at Westminster being aged sixty-five and having reigned fifty-six years. He was buried in the abbey in the old coffin of his patron the Confessor, and there his beautiful bronze effigy remains. He left four children, Edward who succeeded him, Edmund, Earl of Lancaster, Margaret married to Alexander III of Scotland and Beatrix to John, Duke of Brittany. His widow took the veil in 1276 and died at Ambresbury fifteen years later.

\* W. of Hemmingburgh, i. 325.

† T. Wikes, 88.

‡ Rymer, i. 871.

Henry III was witty, imaginative and agreeable. He had some literary tastes, writing verses and keeping a court poet and a librarian. He had also a real flair for music, painting and architecture. Much of the magnificent building and decoration at Westminster and the Tower was done under his direct supervision, and the Painted Chamber in the Palace was largely his creation. In meat and drink he was moderate, and he was famous for his chastity, *il re di semplice vita*. His extravagance was due to his love for the arts and for his relations from overseas.

Though he looked on England as his home he was a foreigner at heart, speaking French as his ordinary speech; and nearly everything he liked came from abroad. Yet his knowledge of England was considerable: on one occasion he repeated the names of two hundred and fifty baronies to Matthew Paris. In matters of religion he was assiduous, being regular at mass and delighting in ecclesiastical ceremonies. "He endowed many abbeys and churches, was very charitable and used always to kiss the lepers." \* When St. Louis, commenting on his constant prayers, remarked "that one should rather listen to good sermons than attend many masses" Henry replied "that he would rather see his friend often than hear him well spoken of"; † and on another occasion he said that he would rather be thought a fool than a man of blood. His motto, set up in many of his rooms, was *Ke ne dune ke ne tine ne pret ke desire*. ‡

Though he had many private virtues—taste, piety, humour, courage, devotion to his family and faith, with a strong belief in his rights—Henry entirely lacked decision, tact or capacity for government; he could never keep his word, and when circumstances went against him he was alternately stubborn, supine or false. His life was spent under the influence of counsellors who were often bad and whom he usually betrayed. His father was probably the worst, his son the best of English kings: Henry stands

\* Trivet, 218.

† Matthew Paris, 1009.

‡ He who gives not what he hath, gets not what he wants.



between them, an indeterminate personality, weak and passionate, pertinacious and irresolute, ambitious and unpractical, prodigal and mean, a schemer and a simpleton—in Stubbs' words "a character hardly worth analysis."

A backward child with few recollections of his wretched parents, he was early impressed by the power of Rome. He learnt that a King could dominate his own land but must bow to the Pope: Normandy and Anjou might be recovered but Magna Charta must be destroyed. From de Burgh, an ardent patriot, he heard more moderate talk, but to logic or argument he was always deaf. With the Queen came new interests; and as military fame and sanctity always attracted him he longed to rival his brother-in-law in Paris. But campaigns and cathedrals brought debts, and debts brought subterfuge and oppression, until at last the public discontent burst its dams and Henry was swept into a maelstrom of revolt among hard fighting men full of character and power. In the struggle he found that all his natural allies were gone, clergy and yeomen, barons and burghers, and that he could only rely on aliens, the Pope and the King of France. With difficulty they pulled him through but they left him a *roi fainéant*, disillusioned, discredited and disarmed. His reign was one of transition, the heart of wax after the heart of stone, the hand of clay before the hand of steel. But in those fifty years of waste and war Englishmen learnt to work together: their involuntary teacher was their unfortunate King.





EDWARD I  
AND ARCHBISHOP WINCHESEY AT LINCOLN IN 1301  
From a manuscript in the British Museum

## EDWARD I

1239-1307

EDWARD I, called Longshanks, was born at Westminster Palace on June 18th 1239, the eldest child of Henry III and Eleanor of Provence. He was named after his patron saint, Edward the Confessor, whom Henry specially revered; while his godfather was Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, who had married his father's sister. Henry who was always short of money did not hesitate to make what he could out of an event as satisfactory to the country as it was to himself, for both he and the Queen had been suspected of sterility. He sent the news far and wide by messengers who were instructed "to return with costly gifts," so that a Londoner remarked "God gave us this infant but our Lord the King sells him."\*

Until he was seven Edward was brought up at Windsor under the care of Hugh Giffard. Five years later he was made Duke of Gascony. On Henry's departure for his campaign in that province in 1253 "after the King had embraced him with many tears and kisses, the boy was left standing on the shore weeping and sobbing and refusing to go away while he could see the sails."†

While Henry was in France he arranged a marriage for Edward with Eleanor of Castile, daughter of Ferdinand III and niece of Alfonso X. The latter prince had claims on Gascony which by this alliance were transferred to Edward. Accompanied by his mother and her brother Boniface, Archbishop of Canterbury, Edward travelled by sea to Bordeaux and thence to Burgos, where he stayed for three months. There in October 1254 he

\* Matthew Paris, 488.

† *Ibid.*, 868.

was married, his bride being ten years old; and he was then knighted by King Alfonso. On his return to Bordeaux Henry received him "like an angel of God," created him Earl of Chester and assigned him an income of 15,000 marks, remarking "what a terrible expense this has been." Edward stayed a year in his duchy before returning to London where he established himself in the palace of the Savoy, a recent erection of one of his prodigal uncles. As a married man of sixteen he was now released from tutelage. He devoted himself to military exercises, "serving in the light troops and the lines at tournaments so as to learn their duties." \* At first he did not pay much attention to civil matters, but as the King continued to draw the Gascon revenues a dispute arose between father and son; and Henry complained that "the times of his own father were coming back, the children fighting against their parents." He gave in however, and Edward then increased his household and often took two hundred horsemen about with him. These followers became a nuisance, pillaging peasants and monks and never paying for their food, while Edward's behaviour was often rough and hectoring; a tale is told of him having a youth deprived of his ears and an eye for not making way on the road.† But he soon began to take his position seriously. As Earl of Chester the Welsh marches were under his control, and to keep order there he needed money. This he borrowed from his uncle Richard of Cornwall and his cousin de Valence. But his expeditions were unsuccessful and he "was much ashamed to be unable to repress the Welsh rebels." At this time he is described as very tall, slim, dark, strong and active, a striking personality.

The King's indecision and extravagance had now become so notorious that in 1258 a Great Council at Oxford compelled him to submit to the rule of a committee of barons. With difficulty Edward was persuaded to add his signature to his father's, but he saw that the national grievances needed redress and he much admired

\* Matthew Paris, 925

† *Ibid.*, 938.

his godfather, Simon de Montfort, who led the popular party. Henry resented his son's attitude and refused to see him, saying that "he should not be able to refrain from kissing him." \* Edward however adhered to the barons and declined to avail himself of the Pope's absolution from his oaths; while his mother it seems did not help to heal the quarrel.

During the next few years Edward was a good deal away in France taking part in tournaments, a form of exercise and amusement at which he excelled. But in England matters grew so much worse that in the spring of 1263 he hurried home at his father's request, bringing with him a number of mercenaries. He was now a man of some experience and in the civil war which de Montfort started against the King he became the leading figure on the royalist side, for he drew a distinction between reforms and treason. At first his strategy was unsuccessful; his unpaid foreign troops caused annoyance in London, he was repulsed at Oxford and Bristol, and though he occupied Windsor Castle by a ruse it was soon retaken by de Montfort. In the summer he went with his father to meet Louis IX at Boulogne, and during the autumn he stayed with his wife at Windsor where some of the western lords joined him. At Christmas he again crossed to France; and when Louis, who had been chosen as arbiter between King and barons, definitely abrogated the Provisions of Oxford by the Mise of Amiens Edward felt himself freed from his former engagements.

In the following year he was not fortunate. After failing to take Gloucester and London he was largely responsible for the defeat of the royalists at Lewes. He had command of the right wing and early in the battle he routed the Londoners: but "enraged at their insolence to his mother" whom they had recently pelted on the Thames, he pursued them for four miles, pillaging their baggage and killing their wounded. When he got back to the field he found that de Montfort had captured his father

\* D. N. B., vi. 434.

and his uncle Richard. He tried to rescue them but had to surrender himself, and he and his cousin Henry of Cornwall were then sent to Dover Castle "where they were kept in custody not very honourably!" \*

For twelve months Edward remained a prisoner, being moved from castle to castle: but in May 1265 he managed to escape from Hereford. He was allowed to exercise his stable so he chose a moment when the horses of his escort were blown and then mounting a fresh one galloped off. His friends met him and he was soon joined by the earls who were jealous of de Montfort. Collecting some troops he took Gloucester and Worcester and in August by a masterly stroke caught de Montfort at Evesham. This time Edward was wary, and de Montfort seeing his careful advance said "He has learnt that from me." The resulting battle was a complete victory for the King's party, Henry being rescued, while de Montfort with his chief adherents were killed. Edward strove in vain to save his uncle's body from desecration and deeply mourned his death.

It took two years to get the country at peace, for the sentences of forfeiture "drove the disinherited to despair." Edward led the campaign against them and was the author of the easier terms which at last closed the contest. From the war he had learnt prudence, from the peace moderation, and at the age of eight-and-twenty he was an approved soldier and statesman—"curteys, a man fulle of mercy." †

King Henry's weak health and character had been shattered by his experiences in the war, and the effective rule was now transferred to Edward who in 1268 was made High Steward of England with control of all the royal castles. Urged by his uncle Louis IX he then determined to join the Seventh Crusade and in August 1270 he started. His last act before leaving Dover was an impetuous but unsuccessful attempt to make his secretary Robert Burnell Archbishop of Canterbury: but the cathedral chapter was too strong for him.

\* T. Wikes, 63.

† P. Langtoft, i. 225.

Accompanied by his wife, 'a beautiful and discreet woman,' Edward travelled overland to Aigues Mortes and thence by sea to Tunis, where he found that Louis had just died and a truce had been made with the Saracens. Discouraged by his followers and compelled to winter in Sicily he swore that "even if all my comrades and countrymen leave me, yet I with Fowen, the master of my horse, will enter Ptolomais, or Achan or Acre, and will keep my word until my body and soul are parted." \* He stuck to his plan and in 1271 relieved Acre and made several raids in Syria; but his lack of troops precluded any real success. During this campaign he nearly lost his life. One evening, when sitting in his house at Acre, a Saracen who had brought him messages asked for an audience. He was admitted and while Edward was looking through a window the Saracen suddenly struck him in the arm with a poisoned dagger. Seizing the knife Edward killed his assailant but in doing so cut himself again. He made light of his wound but it mortified, and only by a severe excision was his life saved. The tale of his wife sucking the blood lacks authority; the contemporary account merely says that the surgeon "asked for the lady to be taken away and she was carried out in tears." When the Sultan's envoys afterwards assured Edward of his innocence in the matter, he answered 'in English' "You worship me but you do not love me." †

In 1272 Edward left Syria and after a seven weeks' voyage arrived in Sicily. There he received news of the deaths of his small son, his uncle Richard and his father. "The first two losses he bore with calm, but the last prostrated him with grief. 'I may get more children' he said 'but never another father.'" From Sicily he went to Rome and at Orvieto he was received by Pope Gregory X, a former member of his own household. Throughout Italy he was welcomed as a hero, a worthy successor of his great-uncle Richard I. On his journey through France he was challenged by the Count of Chalons to meet him in a tournament. The idea appealed to him; he sent to

\* Matthew Paris, 1008.

† W. of Hemmingburgh, i. 337.



England for some nobles to join him, and the contest took place at Lyons in May 1273. But it was much more than a jousting match, for the count had 2,000 men and Edward half that number. Many were killed in the lists, and in the *mêlée* the count seized Edward and tried to drag him from his charger: but Edward unhorsed him and then beat him for not observing the rules.

After doing homage in Paris for his French possessions Edward went to Gascony and was kept there a year suppressing a revolt. Not until August 1274 did he arrive in England and on the 19th of that month he was crowned at Westminster. During his absence the government had been administered by the Earl of Gloucester and Edward's secretary Burnell, who was now made Chanecellor and a bishop: for the next eighteen years Burnell acted as chief minister, collaborating with his master in drafting the laws which made Edward's name.

In 1275 Edward summoned a Parliament of Lords and Commons which passed the First Statute of Westminster—a measure that embodied and elaborated Magna Charta. In the following year he obtained the Parliament's consent to make war on Llewellyn of Wales who had refused him homage, and during the summer he reduced much of the country, working from Chester with his army and along the coast with his fleet. He also paid close attention to domestic legislation. The coinage was reformed, clippers being arrested and two hundred Jewish money-lenders hanged. The Statute of Mortmain was passed, limiting legacies to the Church, and that of Quo Warranto, enquiring into the tenure of land. The latter was an unpopular law and one earl met it by flinging a rusty sword on the judges' table, saying that that was his warrant for his possessions. One day Edward asked some lords' sons who were standing by him "What do you lads talk about when we are in counsel with your fathers? They answered 'Will you not be angry if we say?' 'Certainly not' said Edward. 'Well my Lord King' said one 'this is what we sing:

*Le Roy cuvayte nos deneres  
 E le Rayne nos beaus maners  
 E le Quo Waranto  
 Sal mak us all to do.' "* \*

In 1282 a fresh rebellion broke out in Wales. Edward moved his court to Shrewsbury and took the field again. On capturing Anglesey he observed that "Llewellyn had lost the finest feather in his tail." † Throwing a bridge across the Menai Straits he drove the Welsh back to Snowdon, and after a campaign of some months Llewellyn was killed and his brother taken prisoner. Edward was then able to bring the country under control, building castles and establishing a stable government. At Carnarvon his son Edward was born—the first Prince of Wales—and at Christmas 1284 the King returned to London which he had not visited for three years.

After passing some further laws regulating entails and organising the militia Edward had to revisit Gascony. While there he fell ill and was again nearly killed, this time by lightning. Not until 1288 was he back in England. During his absence abuses had thriven: the judges had been taking bribes, Wales was in fresh revolt, and the Jews as usual were accused of every crime. Edward replaced the judges, pacified the Welsh marches, and in 1290 expelled all Jews from England—an act largely due to his Parliament's dislike of his getting money from anyone but themselves.

In the autumn of that year Queen Eleanor died after a long illness. "A pious and modest woman, merciful to the English, loved by all, a support of the kingdom," ‡ for thirty-six years she had been Edward's constant companion in all his adventures, journeys and campaigns. She had borne him children in Rouen, Acre, Bordeaux and Carnarvon and had shared his dangers and triumphs for a lifetime. To him her loss was irreparable. He escorted her body from Grantham to Westminster, setting

\* W of Hemmingburgh, ii 7. a curious example of the language and accent of the day.

† *Ibid.*, ii. 10.

‡ T. of Walsingham, 16.

up crosses at every halting place, and he mourned her for the rest of his days.

Troubles now began to engross him. In Scotland disputes had arisen about the succession to the crown; and the two claimants, Balliol and Bruce, referred the settlement to Edward as their overlord. Edward went to the border and by the advice of his counsellors pronounced in favour of Balliol. But the partisans of Bruce carried the matter to the Parliament in London and Edward found himself driven into war. Meanwhile fishing disputes in the Channel had led to fights with the French, and as Duke of Aquitaine Edward was summoned to Paris where he was induced to hand over some Gaseon fortresses: he had lost his old friend and Chancellor Burnell and now relied chiefly on Beek, the Bishop of Durham, a less intrepid counsellor. In Wales his convoys were captured, "so that he had to drink honey and water and eat salt meat." On one march a single flagon of wine had been kept for the King, but he refused it saying that in need everything must be in common: "we will all share the same diet until God looks on us again, nor will I eat better than you, being the cause of this business." \*

After this campaign Edward was so hampered by want of funds that he seized all the wool in England and confiscated the coin in religious houses, ordering the clergy to grant him half their revenues. The Dean of St. Paul's was sent to remonstrate with him: "he arrived at the palace healthy and well, but when he came near the King his lips became silent, his bodily strength failed and he fell down dead from terror." † The money was paid, and Edward then returned to Wales and reduced it to obedience. But on the Scottish border desultory warfare went on, while the Channel ports were still raided by the French. The King's lack of money grew so great that in 1295 he summoned what is called the first model Parliament, an assembly of lords spiritual and temporal, knights and burgesses, and from them at last he secured adequate supplies.

\* Trivet, 335.

† Matthew of Westminster, 422.

Balliol, although Edward's nominee, had now allied himself with the French, so Edward with 40,000 men marched on Berwick. Balliol wrote to renounce his homage. Edward had his letter filed in chancery saying "*Ah fou felon tel foli fecis: s'il ne volt venir a nos, nos vendrons a li.*"\* After taking Edinburgh, Stirling and Perth he received Balliol's surrender, and then marched further north "to see the mountains." In August 1296 he returned to England, bringing with him the great seal of Scotland and the stone of Scone.†

The war in Gascony still continued, and to finish it Edward determined to attack the French in Flanders while he sent another army to fight them in the south. But to this the barons objected, Bohun and Bigod, the Earls of Hereford and Norfolk, insisting that their feudal duty only compelled them to accompany the King himself. Edward said angrily "By God, Sir Earl, you shall either go or hang." 'By the same oath,' answered Bigod 'I will do neither.'" Their opposition grew so dangerous that Edward "had to dissemble and to appoint other lords to perform their offices."‡

Before starting abroad he called a meeting of the Londoners outside Westminster Hall, and there, accompanied by his young son, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Earl of Warwick, he addressed the people "bursting into tears and humbly asking pardon for his sins, saying that he ruled them less well than a King should do."§ His ingenuous attitude appealed to his audience and he left England with over 50,000 men. Just before embarking he had another miraculous escape. While riding along the walls of Winchelsea his horse took fright and leapt down from a great height into the road below: but by luck and good horsemanship Edward saved himself.

After a six months' campaign in Flanders a truce was made with the French, one of its conditions being that Edward should marry Margaret, King Philip's sister,

\* W. of Hemmingburgh, ii. 101; Trivet, 344.

† W. of Hemmingburgh, ii. 108.

‡ *Ibid.*, ii. 121.

§ M. of Westminster, 430.

while the Prince of Wales was betrothed to his daughter Isabella, the first alliances between the two families.

Edward then returned to England. During his absence his son had been made to confirm the charters anew, while in Scotland the English had been heavily defeated at Stirling. Edward again marched north and met the enemy at Falkirk. Just before the action his horse threw him and broke two of his ribs,\* but he rode through the day without complaint and signally defeated the Scots, 20,000 of whom were slain. Traversing the country he came to Carlisle "having never relaxed his spirits or his care for his men." On returning to London he again confirmed the charters and in September 1299, soon after his sixtieth birthday, he celebrated his marriage with Margaret of France. One of the chroniclers says that he was really in love with Blanche, Philip's daughter, but that she was considered too young for him,

" Not dame Blanche the swete of whom I spake  
Bot dame Marguerite gode withouten lak." †

In 1301 the new Queen bore a son. Her delivery was so difficult that only by invoking St. Thomas of Canterbury did she survive, "while the child, knowing his real country, would not retain the milk of his French wetnurse and had to have one from England." ‡ In this year a Papal Legate required the King to make peace with Scotland, claiming it as a fief of the Holy See. "' By God's blood ' said Edward ' you think that I am to be frightened by these unctuous falsehoods. Take care that you do not come before me again with such an order. If you do I swear by the Lord that I will ravage Scotland from one sea to the other.' "

The King's position was now much stronger than it had been, for Bohun was dead, and Bigod had made his peace, while Edward's concessions had put him on good terms with the Commons. But the border war still went

\* Another account says that it kicked him while he was lying asleep. W. of Hemmingburgh, ii. 178, Trivet, 372.

† P. Langtoft, ii. 306.

‡ T. of Walsingham, 46.

on with its arduous and inconclusive forays. At a siege of Stirling Edward shewed his old mettle; "being hit by an arrow from the walls he drew it out, spat on it, held it up in his hand and shouted to the archer that he should be hanged." \*

For two years there was quiet, for Edward was ageing and not indisposed to rest; but in 1306 news was brought him at Winchester of the murder of his Regent Comyn and of the coronation of Robert Bruce. Ailing and bitterly angered he had himself carried to Westminster where at a great banquet he knighted his eldest son and swore publicly "by the God of heaven and the two swans that he would again go to Scotland and living or dead would avenge Comyn," and he adjured the Prince and his nobles to take his body with them should he die on the campaign.

The army started with Edward in a litter. He was suffering from dysentery which so weakened him that during the autumn he had to remain at Lanercost. Bruce however was defeated, and in the spring of 1307 Edward determined to lead his troops in person. Offering up his litter in Carlisle cathedral he mounted his horse, but the exertion was too much and he had to take to his bed. This was the end. On July 7th 1307 he died at Burgh-on-Sands bidding his son send his heart to Palestine but keep his bones with the army until Scotland was subdued. He was buried beside Queen Eleanor at Westminster: he had reigned thirty-five years and was aged sixty-eight. By his two wives he had had sixteen children of whom six survived him, Edward who succeeded to the throne, Thomas Earl of Norfolk, Edmund Earl of Kent, Margaret married to John Duke of Lorraine, Elizabeth to John Count of Holland and to Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford, and Mary a nun.

Edward I was a man "of fine figure and exceptionally tall, standing head and shoulders above the ordinary, with long legs and arms, not fat and very active. His hair was silver coloured as a boy, then dark and in old

\* Trivet, 403.

age as white as a swan's." His teeth and sight were good all his life, but like his father he had a drooping eyelid. His speech was indistinct though eloquent and he had the direct and forceful air of his great-uncle Richard I. He was devoted to tournaments, tilting, hawking and hunting, and liked to break up the stag himself—the hardest concession he ever made was to relax the forest laws. Indoors he used to play draughts, but though he knew Latin as well as French and English he was not a great reader. In his clothes he was plain and he rarely wore his crown or affected ceremony.

For his father Edward always had the deepest affection, though he knew and deplored his faults, but to his own children he was severe. Healthy, strong, strenuous and precise, disciplined in mind and body, straightforward and singleminded according to his lights, he had no sympathy with slackness or inefficiency; and in his later days toil, disappointment and the loss of his wife had hardened and embittered him. Yet with a hasty and sometimes cruel temper he was seldom merciless to a suppliant. Once when young he was hawking. His companion overlooked a falcon which had stooped on a duck. Edward cursed him, and the other shouted back that he was glad the stream was between them. In a rage Edward drew his sword and dashed through the water at him: but the youth sat still on his horse and bared his neck, and at this submission Edward at once forgave him.\*

Of his private life little is known. Stern, serious and usually occupied by business he had little time for pleasure. Yet on occasion he could relax. He let himself be "heaved on Easter Monday by the Queen's ladies till he consented to give £14 to enjoy the King's peace," and he wagered the royal washerwoman that she would not ride to hounds and come in at the death, and gladly paid his debt when she did so.† As a young man amusement had taken up his time, but the experiences of the Barons' War sobered him and taught him the rudiments of strategy. Though never a great general he was a born

\* Trivet, 283.

† Vickers, 35.

fighter. He beat in single combat one of the strongest knights in England; in the field he shared the fare and hardships of his men, and he never shewed depression when matters went badly. Encouraged by his remarkable escapes from death he believed himself under the special protection of Providence, and to the end of his life he strove to justify this by setting a public example and doing his duty as a soldier and a King. With a knightly conception of faith and honour, religious by instinct and upbringing, he was a genuine crusader, anxious to emulate his predecessors and to fulfil his father's vows. His Eastern venture had little result, and though he was always at war his campaigns were seldom successful: but he learnt in Scotland the meaning of national feeling and in Wales the worth of longbows and archers.

As a statesman Edward I fills a high place: "More than any King before him since the Conquest he identified himself with his kingdom."\* Opposed by instinct, tradition and interest to the reforms of the popular party he could yet admire the tenacity of de Montfort and understand the value of Parliaments. Like his father he was often hampered for money and often struggling with his barons, but though he would avail himself of the letter of the law he always stuck to his motto "Keep faith," for with a casuist's mind he rarely took an unfair advantage even in battle. A legislator of broad design and execution he realised and fulfilled the work of his ancestors, Henry I and II. Parliaments were perhaps forced on him but they kept him in touch with the people, and the bills they passed were his own. In a series of famous statutes he defined the land laws, put an end to subinfeudation, repelled the encroachments of the Church, organised the courts of justice and accepted the modern principles of taxation. Rightly styled "the greatest of the Plantagenets," "the Hammer of the Scots" and "the English Justinian" Edward came when he was most needed, for his straight and simple character was able to direct and restrain the forces which

\* Orton, 367.



a turbulent age had produced. The epitaph on his plain marble tomb at Westminster typifies his spirit and his faith.

Edwardus Primus  
Mallens Scotorum  
Hic Est.  
MCCCVII.  
Pactum Serva.





### EDWARD II

From a drawing by Professor Tristram of a painting in Westminster Abbey.  
By kind permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum

## EDWARD II

1284-1327

EDWARD II, styled of Carnarvon, was born at the castle there on April 25th, 1284, the third but only surviving son of Edward I and Eleanor of Castile. At the time of his birth the King his father was completing the conquest of Wales and he is said to have presented his infant son to the Welsh chieftains as "one who spoke neither French nor English and should be their ruler."

As a child Edward was betrothed to Margaret of Scotland, but in 1290 she died, and a few months later he lost his mother. He was left in consequence much to himself, for his elder sisters were married and his father was constantly absent on campaigns. That he should not be too much alone a playmate was found for him in the person of Piers Gaveston, the son of a Gascon knight who had done good service in the wars. Both boys were handsome, audacious and intelligent; little control was exercised over them; they learnt less, and they soon developed tastes which were then unusual in their class. They rowed, drove teams, trained dogs, dug traps, thatched cottages, and did smith's work, while indoors they amused themselves with singers, players and buffoons. As they grew older tournaments, hunting and racing divided their time with gambling and drinking.\* Gaveston was an expert at all he set his hand to, and the young Edward readily fell under his sway, until what had been pleasure became business and all his affections centred on his friend.

In 1297 Edward was left as Regent of England during

\* Stubbs, ii, 340.

his father's campaign in Flanders, and after it he was betrothed to Isabella, daughter of Philip the Fair of France. Four years later, when nearly seventeen, he was created Earl of Chester and Prince of Wales, the first son of an English King to receive that title :

“ The Kyng gav his sonne at the parlement  
Wales in to wonne and Chestre shute to rent  
Mastrelle and Ponttif that er beyond the se :  
Prince he was up ris and erle also was he.” \*

In the following year Edward was summoned to Parliament and from this time forward he took some share in the government, leading a division of the army in Scotland and presiding at Councils in the King's absence, “ though he did not sit in the high seat.” † But he shewed slight interest in military or state affairs, preferring the society and amusements of his companions, most of whom, except his cousin de Clare and his friend Despencer, had little birth or breeding. His household increased in size and expense and included acrobats, musicians, watermen, tailors and actors ; while he remained so closely attached to Gaveston that his father grew disquieted. The King had now married again ; and his age, his constant business and his young family made him see less of his eldest son.

The Prince lived mostly on the Thames, at Windsor, Langley or Sonning, occasionally going to stay with his father at Midhurst or Battle. A collection of his private letters in 1305 illustrate his interests. They are in French or Latin and refer chiefly to his servants, armourers, clerks and grooms for whom he seeks places or pensions from various officials. He sends the Count of Evreux a trotting pony and some Welsh harriers, promising him several “ wild Welshmen to manage them ” : he begs the Earl of Lincoln to advise him about his troubles with the King : he asks the Archbishop of Canterbury and three country knights for the loan of their stallions : he tells the keeper of his wardrobe to buy him two good hackneys

\* P. Langtoft, ii. 315 (Montreuil & Ponthieu).

† Chronicle of Edward II, i. 143.

with the best saddles and harness from Taunton in London for the approaching visit of the Queen of France, and directs him to purchase "for his little players a pair of trumpets, good and strong for packing, and a pair of small kettle-drums for Francekyn, his kettle-drummer." He sends his sister, the Lady Mary, a hare, promises her the organs she wants for her convent but has not yet found any wine good enough for her: he requests the Abbot of Shrewsbury to house his rhymers while he is learning to fiddle: he thanks Despencer for the grapes sent him "which he ate on Sunday before breakfast": he prays Sir John de Landon that the singing clerk who taught the children of his own chapel may be lent to his sister the Countess of Hereford; and he asks the Mayor of London to help his valet in a suit, urges a judge to let off his armourer for some delinquency, and hopes that a bishop will "hinder the purgation" of a robber who hates him.\*

At this time, when he had just come of age, Edward had fallen out with the Bishop of Lichfield, who was the Treasurer, speaking to him so grossly that the King sent him away from court for five months and would not see him until he had apologised. Eventually the young Queen composed the quarrel; and in 1306 Edward was knighted at a great festival at Westminster where with his father he took "the oath of the swans"—never to rest until the King of Scots was beaten. He led a division of the army to the north and conducted a merciless campaign of ravage on the border. At Carlisle he induced his former enemy the Treasurer to ask the King if he might give his mother's county of Ponthieu to Gaveston: but this so enraged his father that he sent for Edward, cursed him, "seized his hair with both hands, pulled it out until he was tired, and then turned him out of the room."† He then ordered Gaveston to quit the country and made Edward swear never to bring him back without the consent of Parliament.

On July 7th 1307 Edward I died, leaving his son various

\* Public Records, 9th Report, pp. 246-9.

† W. of Hemmingburgh, ii. 272.

directions about the war which were never fulfilled. Edward had gone to London to prepare for his marriage but he hurried back to Carlisle and rapidly closed the campaign, with Scotland unsubdued. In August he recalled Gaveston, gave him £50,000 and the earldom of Cornwall to the exclusion of the young princes his half-brothers, put the Treasurer in the Tower and replaced him by Reynolds, the keeper of his own wardrobe. This man was the son of a Windsor baker, unlettered and immoral, but with Edward his talent as an actor outweighed such disadvantages. In October Gaveston was married to Margaret of Gloucester, Edward's niece and the richest heiress in the kingdom; and two months later, at a tournament at Wallingford, with some other young bloods he unhorsed the leading earls, "at which he exulted so much that his pride damaged him more than his prowess."

The arrangements for Edward's marriage were soon completed. Isabella of France though only twelve years old was reputed the most beautiful girl in Europe, while Edward was held to be its handsomest prince. He was tall, fair haired, well formed, exceptionally strong and healthy, and in all bodily exercises active and adroit. In January 1308 he crossed to Boulogne to meet his bride leaving Gaveston as Regent. "It was thought remarkable that one who had recently been in exile from the land should now be its keeper."\*

The wedding festivities were short but magnificent, four Kings and Queens attending them. In February Edward and his bride returned to England accompanied by many of the young Queen's relations. They were received at Dover by Gaveston whom Edward embraced calling him his brother. A fortnight later the coronation took place, and there was much jealousy at Gaveston carrying the crown: one outraged noble "only abstained from killing him because of the sanctity of the occasion." Like his ancestors Edward had little affection for the barons and he meant to rule the country through his own friends.

\* Chr. Edw. II, ii. 157.

He greatly admired the French and their ways, and a revival of foreign influence seemed probable.

The earls however were determined to deal with Gaveston. Headed by the King's cousin Thomas of Lancaster, who alone held five earldoms, they joined together and demanded his banishment. No attention was paid to their request. Edward openly passed on to his favourite the wedding presents of the French princes and loaded him with lands; while Gaveston continued to display his plate and jewels, his horses and servants, and to upset his rivals in the palace or the lists. But the Council still insisted on his exile, and though Edward refused, the opposition became so strong that he was forced to deprive Gaveston of his earldom and to order him to go abroad. In June 1308 he accompanied Gaveston to Bristol and then suddenly appointed him Deputy of Ireland, giving him an appropriate revenue. The earls, enraged at this trick, boycotted the court; but by threats and promises Edward gradually gained them over, and within a year Gaveston was allowed to return. But he had learnt nothing. He still monopolised the King, so that Edward "neither spoke or smiled to any earl or baron when he was in the room,"\* and with the King's approval he still exercised his wit on the most exalted members of the aristocracy. Lancaster he called "*viel cochon*," Gloucester "*fitz de putayne*," Warwick "*chien noir*," Warenne "*boele crevée*" and Pembroke "*sale Juif*." With the King under his control and the conduct of the government in his hands he spent so much money that both Queen and court were in penury. Isabella and the lords hated him, but they could do little. So long as Gaveston was with him Edward cared for nothing, and in 1310 he even agreed to the appointment of twenty-one Lords Ordainers who were to manage his household and the kingdom, a concession by which he hoped to retain his friend. As a diversion he led a campaign against the Scots, taking Gaveston with him and staying away for a year. When he returned to

\* Chr. Edw. II, 168.



London the articles of the Ordainers were ready. As he had feared the principal item was his favourite's exile, and despite an obstinate resistance Edward had again to submit.

For the third time Gaveston left the country. He went well fortified with money and letters, but by Christmas he was back at Windsor where Edward publicly pardoned him and restored his estates. A general writ to the sheriffs says "*Come Monsieur Percs de Gavaston Counte de Cornuaille par nostre maundement seit ja revenu savour fsons ke Nous li tenons bon & loial a nostre fei & a nostre pees et de nostre Real Poer vous commandons que por tel li tegnetz & ceste chose facez publier.*" \*

This repudiation of his promises roused Edward's opponents afresh. Gaveston was excommunicated, the earls took arms, and the King fled with his friend to York "where he debated every day with the Council about Piers' safety." † Once Lancaster nearly caught them, "seizing all the chargers and great horses of Piers' or rather of the King's, while the Queen was left without escort or money." ‡ At last the two got separated, and Gaveston was then compelled to surrender. Edward strove to save him, and the earls promised that his life should be spared; but Lancaster had determined on his death, and on June 19th 1312 the favourite was beheaded, § a judicial murder which started the long political struggle between the House of Lancaster and the Crown. When the news was brought to Edward he only said "By God what a fool he was: he never got into the earl's hands at my advice." || But his grief was terrible; he mourned for Gaveston as for a son and buried him in a costly shrine at Langley where the two had passed so many happy hours. Throughout this fight Gaveston's fiercest foe had been Lancaster, his single ally Despencer: Edward, who with

\* Rymer, iii. 298.

† Chr. Edw. II, ii. 175-6.

‡ *Ibid.*, ii. 175-6.

§ Bridlington (*Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, ii): "After a trial before two itinerant justices."

|| Chr. Edw. II, ii. 183.

all his faults was a faithful friend, never forgave the one and never forgot the other.

The opposition to the King now somewhat diminished, for Pembroke and Warenne resented Lancaster's conduct. In November 1312 the Queen bore a son, and peace was made with the earls, Gloucester, Gaveston's brother-in-law, acting as mediator. In the following spring Archbishop Winchelsey, another of Edward's opponents, died; and Reynolds, now a bishop and Chancellor, became Primate. Avoiding meeting Parliament Edward took his wife to France for the coronation of her cousin the King of Navarre. On his return the earls made their formal submission; and Edward asked them to dinner and dined himself with Lancaster. A subsidy was then granted, and he was given back Gaveston's huge hoard of plate and jewels.\* This and the confiscation of the Templars' wealth, to which he had been persuaded by the Pope, left him for the moment comparatively rich.

In the winter of 1314 Robert Bruce captured Edinburgh. During the spring Edward assembled an army and marched north. There was an indecisive skirmish at Stirling, and Gloucester suggested that delay would be wise. Edward called him a liar and a traitor; Gloucester replied that he would prove his loyalty. On June 24th the battle of Bannockburn was fought. The English feudal cavalry were totally defeated by the Scottish pikemen, Gloucester and many lords being killed. "The King fought like a lion, but he had to fly, and when the royal banner was seen retreating the whole army broke up."† This defeat destroyed Edward's last hold on Scotland, and within a few years Bruce's brother had shattered his authority in Ireland. Gloucester, his chief support, was dead, Despencer was nearly as unpopular as Gaveston had been, and Archbishop Reynolds was powerless. At York the King met his Parliament and had to accept all its demands. His ministers were dismissed, the expenses of his household were reduced to £10 a day, and the Lords

\* Rymer, iii. 388-93, gives the items in detail.

† Chr. Edw. II, ii. 205.

Ordainers, with Lancaster at their head, took over the government. Their rule however was not fortunate. Revolts broke out, the Scottish war continued, and bad harvests and high prices were not remedied by statutes regulating the cost of commodities.

About this time Queen Isabella began to make her influence felt. She was eighteen, the mother of the heir apparent and a young woman of beauty, character and passion. For five years her only blood relation about the court had been her uncle Lancaster,\* her only countryman Gaveston, and she had shared the hatred of the aristocrat for the *parvenu*, more especially as the latter had deprived her of the comforts of her rank and of the company, perhaps the affections, of her husband. She was determined to recover her place, and for the rest of the reign she played an increasing part in politics.

The prospects of peace were not promising, and for six years the country was torn by the hostilities between the King and Lancaster, who were equally incompetent rulers. Revolts in Wales and Ireland, risings in England and on the border taxed the resources of a divided government. Lancaster would not attend Parliament, and Edward withdrew to his manors. In 1316 he stayed for many weeks at Clarendon "surrounding the forest with ditches and doing other things not at all suited to his dignity." † In that year he sent an embassy to the Pope with many of Gaveston's jewels, asking for absolution from his oaths to keep the ordinances. In this he failed, but he was able to detach Pembroke and Warrenne from Lancaster's party and gradually he retrieved something of his position.

In 1318 a semblance of accord was come to, and "the King and the earl kissed each other with many embraces." ‡ But Edward was still so powerless that at Oxford an impostor or madman, "an educated man, a writer, who took about a dog and cat with him and introduced himself

\* Both were descended from Blanche of Navarre.

† Trivet, Continuation, 18.

‡ Merimuth, 53.

into the palace,"\* was able to pass himself off as heir to the throne.

Two years later the loss of Berwick enforced a temporary alliance between Edward and Lancaster, and a truce was made with Scotland. The King and Queen then went to Amiens, where Edward did homage for his French possessions. On his return to England the barons met him with fresh complaints against his chamberlain, the younger Despencer. Sharing his father's favour with Edward this lord had, like Gaveston, married a daughter of Gloucester's and had thus acquired the county of Glamorgan. His father and he were always trying to annex their neighbours' lands, until lawsuits and fights had led to a confederacy against them. Lancaster and the Mortimers were their chief opponents, and the struggle went on much as it had done with Gaveston until Edward was again forced to give in; and in July 1321 the two Despcncers were banished. But soon afterwards Edward got hold of the Mortimers and sent them to the Tower, and he then recalled his friends. Emboldened by this success he suddenly seized Berkeley and Kenilworth Castles, Lancaster's principal strongholds. The earl fled north, but was defeated and captured at Boroughbridge by the royal forces. He was brought before Edward without delay and in March 1322 he was executed at Pontefract, "where he had built a strong tower in which to imprison the King."† It was Edward's revenge for the death of Gaveston, late but complete.

There was at once a change of government. The ordinanees were revoked, the King's enemies hanged or confined, and the Despcncers reinstated in all their former power. But Edward had gone too far, for by the execution of her uncle and the recall of the hated favourites he had permanently alienated his wife; and she now began to work definitely against him.

The Despcncers were as tactless as Gaveston had been. They offended even the archbishop by their rapacity and they infuriated the Queen by limiting her expenditure to

\* Trivet, Cont., 26, and Bridlington, 55. † Vita Edw. II, 270.

twenty shillings a day. Meanwhile another fruitless expedition to Scotland, where he only avoided capture by hard riding,\* had further damaged Edward's prestige, and when peace was made all his father's gains had disappeared.

In 1324 Roger Mortimer escaped from the Tower. He was young and handsome and it is probable that he was helped by the Queen, who was staying there for her confinement. He fled to France; and soon afterwards the Despencers, anxious to be quit of Isabella, encouraged Edward to let her visit her brother King Charles IV about the homage question. She went to Paris in March 1325, "doubly glad, for she wished to visit her own country and to get away from her persecutors." † There she again met Mortimer, and a criminal intimacy began or continued between them. In the summer she wrote to Edward suggesting that he should send his son over to represent him. The Council urged Edward to go himself "but the Despencers, not daring to accompany him or to remain in England during his absence," ‡ carried the day; and in September the young prince joined his mother. Edward was now so absolute "that no one dared to contravene him and whatever he willed even without reason had the force of law, so terrified were the lords of punishment." §

The homage being duly performed Edward ordered the Queen and Prince to return; but Isabella told her brother that marriage was a bond between husband and wife, and that until the middleman who divided them was gone she would live single or in a convent. || Edward reiterated his demands. In December he wrote to the Queen: "*Dame, sovente foiz nous vous avons mandez le grant desir que nous avons que vous feusselz pres de nous . . . aussi come vous feussiez en grant meschief, venissez par devers nous od tote haste, totes excusacions cessantes*"; and to his son: "*Tres chier filtz, tot soiez vous de tendre age remembrez bien ce que nous vous chargeasmes & commandasmes a vestre departir de nous a Dove & de ce que vous nous respondistes lors. . . . Et puis qil est ensi*

\* Bridlington, 79. † Vita Edw. II, 269. ‡ Merimuth, 64.

§ Vita Edw. II, 280.

|| Ibid., 286.

*que vestre Homage est resceu exploitez vous devers nostre Tres cher Frere le Roi de Fraunce, vestre Uncle, & prenez vestre conge de lui, et venez par devers nous, en la compaignie nostre Tres chere Compaignie la Roine, vestre Mere. . . . Et si ele ne veigne, venez vous, ove lote haste, car nous avons tres grant desir de vous veer et parler : Et ces ne lessetz, en nulle manere, ne pur mere ne pur autri, sur notre baizon.”\**

But these commands were vain. Isabella took her son to Flanders, where she betrothed him to a daughter of the Count of Hainault, and she then started a correspondence with the discontented English, drawing them to her side and collecting partisans on the Continent.

Urged on by the Despencers Edward now outlawed his wife and son. Isabella then showed her hand, and in September 1326 she suddenly landed in Suffolk. She had with her her son, the Prince, her brother-in-law, the Earl of Kent, her lover, Roger Mortimer, and a few Hainaulters; and she was soon joined by a number of barons and by many Londoners. On hearing this news Edward left the Tower and went with the Despencers to Gloucester. There in the abbot's parlour, which was painted with pictures of the Kings of England, he asked how soon his own would be added.† He strove to raise troops, but he met with little success, for the invaders were regarded as saviours of the country. While he tarried in the west Isabella marched on Oxford, where Bishop Orlton of Hereford preached a sermon in her favour. At Bristol she caught and hanged the elder Despencer on a gibbet fifty feet high, and she then issued a proclamation taking over the government in the name of her son. Edward, after an attempt to reach Lundy Island, fled to Wales; but the Welsh were easily bribed, and in November he was handed over to his enemies. The younger Despencer was executed, the Chancellor imprisoned, and the great seal given to Bishop Orlton; while Edward was sent to Kenilworth where he remained during the winter in the custody of his cousin Henry of Lancaster.

Early in 1327 a Parliament met at Westminster, and by

\* Rymer, iv. 181-2.

† Borenius, 19.

them the young Prince was chosen King. A deputation led by Bishop Orleton was sent to Edward at Kenilworth to require his abdication; and on January 20th "dressed in black, fainting and sobbing" Edward resigned his crown. The Chief Justice then formally renounced the allegiance of the kingdom, the Steward of the Household broke his staff and Edward's reign was over.

At first he was well treated, one hundred marks a month being allowed for his support: but the Queen since her liaison with Mortimer had taken a strong aversion to her husband, and the sinister bishop seconded her desires. In the spring Edward was successively removed to Corfe, Bristol and Berkeley Castles. On his ride to the latter place he was crowned with straw and jeered at by his captors who bade him "Fare forth, Syr Kyngc." When they shaved him with cold Severn water Edward said "whether you will or no I have warm tears for my beard." \* At Berkeley his treatment grew worse, though Isabella continued to send him "soft clothes and soothing words." † But his enemies had determined on his death. He was put into a pestilential chamber over a charnel house, where he passed his hours in writing verses, some of which still remain. ‡ Of the manner of his death there is no certainty. The most credible version is that Bishop Orleton sent the decisive order, a letter with a double meaning. § On September 21st 1327 Thomas de Gournay and John de Maltravers went into Edward's bedchamber, smothered him with pillows and then impaled him on a hot iron, his shrieks of agony being heard beyond the castle walls. His body was shewn before its burial in St. Peter's at Gloucester, but a legend supported by some curious evidence recounts his escape from England to Cambray and his survival for many years as a hermit. || His son subsequently built him

\* Moore, 316.

† Merimouth, 70.

‡ In a manuscript at Longleat. Roy. Comn. Hist. MS., 3rd Report, 1872, p. 180.

§ "*Edwardum occidere nolite timere bonum est.*"

|| Chr. Edw. II, cv-cix.

a magnificent tomb where his effigy remains. Edward was forty-three at the time of his death and he had reigned almost twenty years. He left two sons, Edward III who succeeded him and John of Cornwall who died a child, and two daughters married to Rainald Duke of Guelders and David King of Scots. He had no natural children.

Edward II was a man of singularly fine appearance, strong and healthy, a good talker, quick in reply,\* but more interested in amusement than in government or war. Bereft of his mother when quite a child, seeing little of his father and without brothers of his own age, he easily fell a victim to the attractions of his Gascon playfellow. The "dull but dignified earls" whose sons should have been his natural companions resented the intruder with whom they could not compete, and as Gaveston monopolised Edward they drew apart. Grooms and rustics, minstrels and players, supplied their place, and when Edward became King his character had taken what was then an unkingly mould. Pitch and toss was his favourite pastime: he would make his painter dance on the table at dinner, pay a servant to go on falling off his pony, and buy up a boat-load of vegetables as he rowed down the river in state. Yet he adored sport, had a passion for horses, and was an expert at most knightly exercises. But he was lazy and unbusinesslike, arbitrary and prodigal, he despised convention, and his dignity was marred by a too familiar behaviour.

As to his morals there is no evidence. He used to say that he had never been able to like another woman since he saw his wife,† and he seems to have been technically faithful though he certainly neglected her. The more serious accusations that have been made against him are probably unjustified:‡ the manner of his death perhaps gave rise to them. Of his religious views nothing is known, though he founded Oriel College and built some chapels. With little learning, colourless as a soldier and incapable as a statesman, if he had a policy it was to depress the baronage and to govern through his courtiers. But the

\* Bridlington, 91.

† Moore, 315.

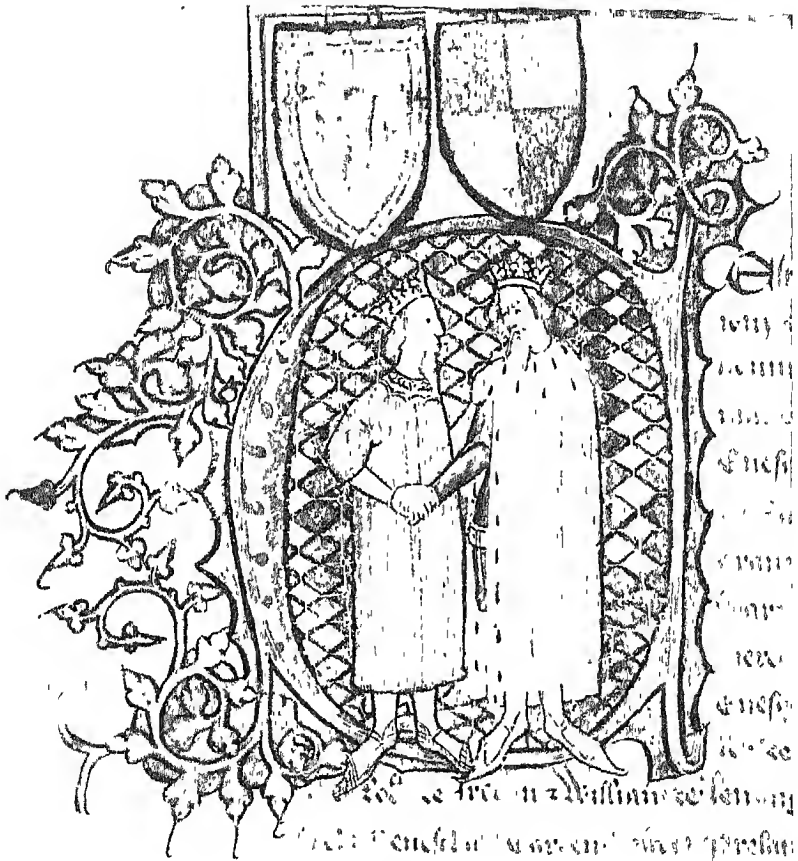
‡ Tout, iii 240.



feeling of England, loyal to its King, was averse to such a system : and where de Montfort had failed Gaveston or the Despencers had small chance of success.

Edward however was not without virtues. He had spirit and wit, he was faithful to his friends, and his democratic tastes perhaps concealed some sympathy for his subjects. He could on occasion take a line of his own and under the fiercest blows of fate he was never ignoble. But he lacked insight and judgment, he could never learn a lesson, and his reign was a long series of calamities to his people and himself due in the main to his own acts. Succeeding a strong father he failed to conciliate his most powerful lords in a time of scarcity, and he was ruined first by his friends and then by those who should have been his friends. He provided an example which was effective for three hundred years, that England would not tolerate the rule of favourites and that their masters must pay for their sins. Thriftless, indeterminate and vague, neither serious nor vicious, one of the least known of English Kings, Edward's punishment was heavy. He lost his favourites, his wife, his kingdom and his life, and he left behind him a reputation worse probably than he deserved.





EDWARD III

AND DAVID BRUCE, KING OF SCOTS, IN 1357

From an illumination in the British Museum

## EDWARD III

1312-1377

EDWARD III was born at Windsor on 13th November 1312, the eldest son of Edward II and Isabella of France. At the age of seven he was created Earl of Chester but he was never styled Prince of Wales. His tutor was Richard Bury, an Oxford scholar and Benedictine monk who became a famous patron of learning and was one of the earliest English book collectors: a man of character with a talent for affairs and the humanities he rose to be Bishop of Durham, Treasurer and Chancellor of England and Ambassador to France, Germany and the Low Countries. Under such a mentor Edward's prospects should have been good, but his domestic environment was unfortunate, for his father and mother were estranged, the government was unpopular, and the country disturbed.

In the autumn of 1325, in order to avoid going to France himself, the King created his son Duke of Aquitaine and sent him to Paris to do the necessary homage to his uncle Charles IV. There the young prince joined his mother, who was planning rebellion against her husband with her lover Roger Mortimer, and there, despite his father's orders, Edward remained for nearly a year. In the following summer his mother took him to Valenciennes and arranged for him his marriage to one of the daughters of Count William of Hainault. Before leaving England Edward had been expressly warned by his father not to stay abroad, not to consent to any marriage, and not to trust Mortimer. The third injunction was the only one he obeyed.

In September 1326, Isabella with Mortimer and the

young Edward landed in Suffolk. The Queen, dressed in widow's weeds, announced that she had come to rescue her husband from his evil advisers. She was joined by several lords and many Londoners, and with a growing army she marched across England in his pursuit. At Oxford the Bishop of Hereford publicly proposed the King's deposition; at Bristol the Prince was proclaimed guardian of the kingdom, and a few days later he and his mother received the ensigns of sovereignty which the bishop had made haste to take from the King.

Edward seems never to have seen his father again. Early in 1327 he was chosen King by the Parliament at Westminster, but he refused to accept the crown before his father's abdication. When this had been procured, again by the offices of Bishop Orleton, Edward was crowned, having previously been knighted by his cousin Lancaster. But the government remained under the control of the Queen and her paramour Mortimer, to whom two-thirds of the royal revenues were allocated. Edward though not yet fifteen was forward for his age; he had already seen and heard much of the conduct of Mortimer and his mother; and this diversion of his property, coupled with the death of his father in the following September, did not increase his confidence in them.

The first act of the new reign was the conclusion of a treaty with France, by which England paid 50,000 marks. It was followed by an unfortunate expedition to Scotland. Three times the English came within sight of the Scots, but Bannockburn was not yet forgotten and on each occasion the King's advisers avoided battle, until James Douglas with three hundred men rode into the English camp by night and cut the cords of the royal tent. Eventually Edward had to retire and he then resigned his Scottish claims: the only fighting he had seen was that between his English and Flemish followers.

During his visit to the Netherlands Edward had been betrothed to a daughter of the Count of Hainault. Philippa was the one he preferred. She was two years his junior, dark and 'not uncomely,' and like himself a

great-grandchild of Philip III of France. In January 1328 Edward married her at York, and in the following July his sister Joan was betrothed to Prince David of Scotland. But these alliances failed to popularise the rule of Isabella and Mortimer. Lancaster, a stupid man but the King's nominal guardian, had for some time tried to check their tyranny, and with Edward's uncles, the Earls of Kent and Norfolk, he now refused to attend Parliament and collected a force at Winchester. But the earls left him, Mortimer ravaged his lands, and though the feeling of the country was all on his side he had to compromise.

In 1329 Edward went to France to do his homage for Aquitaine. The ceremony took place in the cathedral at Amiens, and he was careful not to prejudice any of his royal rights, paying his fealty in crown, sword and spurs and not putting his hands between those of his suzerain.\* During his absence his mother and Mortimer entrapped the Earl of Kent by making him believe that his half-brother Edward II was still alive and so inciting him to rebel. The earl was then seized and executed, the young King being kept in ignorance of the whole affair until it was over. But Edward was learning wisdom; and the murders of his father and uncle, the ignominious treaties with France and Scotland, and the adultery and usurpation of his mother and Mortimer determined him to act. In October a Parliament was held at Nottingham. The Queen Mother and Mortimer had their lodgings in the castle, and at midnight Edward with his friends entered their chamber by a secret staircase. In his mother's room he seized Mortimer, it is said with his own hands, and sent him under escort to London. There he was attainted and hanged at Tyburn. Isabella was taken to Castle Rising in Norfolk where she remained a prisoner for life, being formally visited once a year by her son.

Edward was just seventeen, already a father, and exceptionally advanced for his age. Of a fine figure and well proportioned though not very tall, he was strik-

\* Froissart, i. 27; Rymer, iv. 481-2.

ingly handsome, with a marvellous dignity and grace and "the serene expression of a god." Strong and muscular, a keen huntsman, falconer, swordsman and sailor, he was also able and popular. He now took over the government himself, appointing Stratford, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, as his Chancellor. In 1331 the two went privately for a few weeks to France and Flanders to pay some vows and see the country. In the summer Edward gave a great tournament in Cheapside, a form of exercise and magnificence in which he delighted. He and his companions "were dressed as Tartars, the ladies wearing red velvet tunics and white camelot caps as they rode in pairs through the street." \* During the tilting the staging on which Queen Philippa sat gave way, and Edward at once swore to hang the men who had set it up: but at his wife's intercession he spared them.†

At this time Edward was in a position of singular felicity, for he was powerful, secure and idolised by his subjects. Ambitious to retrieve his recent losses and to emulate the exploits of his grandfather he now led an expedition against Berwick and defeated the Scots at *Halidon Hill*. It was his first battle and he distinguished himself by making his knights fight on foot. His victory fired him to look further afield, and as France, the traditional ally of the Scots, had come into the war he set up a claim to the French crown. The death of Charles IV had left Edward's mother Queen Isabella a near though not the nearest heir; and despite the Salic Law which was said to debar a woman from the throne Edward seized the excuse. The French however had chosen Philip of Valois for their King; and the dispute between him and Edward led to the Hundred Years' War, Edward claiming the kingdom of France, and Philip the duchy of Guienne.

After various challenges and negotiations Philip obtained the alliance of Navarre and of some German Princes, while Edward secured that of the Emperor and Flanders, where he was supporting Robert of Artois, a French rebel.

\* *Annales Paulini*, 354.      † *W. of Hemmingburgh*, ii. 303.

Between England and Flanders there was a growing connection which Edward's marriage had strengthened. Colonies of fullers and weavers from the Low Countries were already established in Norwich, and the impetus of the wool industry was benefiting both nations. The war was thus not purely dynastic, for the French were set on recovering Gascony and annexing Flanders, while the English were determined to keep the one and protect the other because of their trade. France also held out attractive opportunities of plunder, while the English were moved by a military spirit of expansion. A definite national movement had begun.

Pope Benedict strove to prevent the war. He sent two cardinals to Edward who received them "at the door of his small hall in the Palace of Westminster and led them thence to the Painted Chamber."\* But their mission was useless, and in the summer of 1338 Edward sailed with 200 ships to Flanders. Before leaving he created his eldest son, a boy of eight, Duke of Cornwall, the first duke to be made in England. At Coblenz he met the Emperor, who lent him some mercenaries and appointed him Imperial Vicar. But as the Flemish burghers were only willing to defend their own borders and hesitated to enter France the campaign was a costly failure. Edward besieged Cambrai with cannon, its earliest recorded use, but most of his time was spent in negotiations with foreign princes, in progresses along the frontier, and in expensive visits to Antwerp and Brussels.

In January 1340 he formally took the arms and title of King of France, partly to persuade the French feudatories to join him, partly to impress his own people. He was already in financial straits and had pawned the crown jewels, and on returning to England to raise money he had to leave the Queen with her crown and the Earls of Derby and Salisbury as security for his debts. In exchange for the usual confirmation of the charters and a promise not to levy tallage he obtained from Parliament a grant of supplies. In June, when about to sail again

\* Brayley, 207.



for Flanders he heard that the French fleet was off Blankenburgh. The Council urged him not to risk the passage, but Edward replied "You and the archbishop have all agreed upon a prepared speech to prevent my going, but I shall go whether you like it or not, and you who are afraid without reason can stay at home." \* On June 24th he met the French squadron off Sluys. His ships were inferior in numbers and size; but he manœuvred so as to avoid the sun and gained a complete victory, three-quarters of the French fleet being taken or sunk. This success gave him command of the Channel.

On landing he challenged Philip to single combat: "*Philip de Valeys . . . Sumus nous entrez en la terre de Flandres comme Seigneur Sovereyn de ycele . . . Nous nous treoms vers vous pur mettre bref fyn sur notre Droitur chalaunge, si vous voillez approcher entre nos Deux Corps.*" Philip, who was doing well in Gascony, paid no attention to this cartel, so Edward had an arrow shot into his camp with the verses:

*"Si valeas, venias, Valois. depelle timorem,  
Non lateas: pateas. moveas: ostende vigorem."* †

But his money had not come from England, so in September Edward had to make a truce. Two months later he returned to London, landing at midnight at the Tower after a stormy passage. He found the fortress unguarded, its Lieutenant away visiting a lady, and the royal children and their nurses almost alone. In a rage he dismissed half the chief officers of state, appointed a layman to be Chancellor, and embarked on a quarrel with Archbishop Stratford. Since the beginning of the war there had been a peace party led by Stratford who had been left at home to collect the taxes and govern the country. Dealing only with the business side of the campaign he had become less active in its prosecution as its expenses increased. He now replied to the royal writs by sermons and letters, refusing to be judged except by his peers; and

\* R. of Avesbury, 55.

† Strickland, ii. 558, note.

for several months the country was scandalised by the dispute. At last a reconciliation was effected. Edward was young and Stratford old; the latter's counsel was less acceptable than it had been, and after his constitutional resistance had triumphed he gladly retired from office.

Edward was still bent on war. If France was unpromising there was always Scotland, and in 1341 he set out for the north. But he lost Edinburgh and Stirling and had to make another damaging truce. He also seriously tarnished his personal honour. Wark Castle near the border was held by Katherine, Countess of Salisbury, a famous beauty whose husband Edward had left in Flanders as surety for his debts. She entertained the King as a guest, and he fell in love with her and put no restraint on his passion. The lady repulsed him: "*Lors dit la Dame, Haa, Cher Sire ne me veuillez ni moquer ni tenter, je ne pourrai cuider que si noble et gentil Prince eust penser a deshonorer moy et mon mary. Elle laissa le Roy fort esbahy. Il disna fort petit.*"\* "*La nuit il entra dedens la chambre de la dame, puis ferma l'uy de la garde robe, affin que ses demoiselles ne la peussent aidier, puis la prit et luy estouppa la bouche si fort qu'elle ne poeat crier que ii cris ou iii, et puis l'enforcha a telle douleur et a tel martire qu'onques femme ne fut ainsy villainement traittee: et la laissa comme gisant toute pasmée, sainant par nez et par bouche et auttre part,—puis s'en parti l'endemain sans dire mot.*" When the earl heard this sad tale on his return he went with his son to London and sternly rebuked his sovereign—"Or m'avez vous du tout jetté en la merde et deshonnéuré villainement. Sy prens de vous congié, car jamais en ce pays ne vous ne auttre ne me verrez." Soon afterwards he was killed fighting the Moors.† There seems little doubt that Edward was guilty of this ignoble deed which has been improved into the legend of the lady and the Garter.

For a time he was now content to leave war alone. He made raids into Brittany and Flanders, but his lack of funds usually kept him in England. So great were his

\* Froissart, i. 86.

† Jean le Bel, ii. 33, 34.

debts that by defaulting he ruined the Florentine banking houses of Bardi and Peruzzi.

In 1346 he determined to make a fresh attack on France, and with 15,000 men he crossed to Normandy. After ravaging the country for a month he met Philip in August at Crécy and there by good leading and fighting defeated him in a battle which made the reputation of the English archers, a paid professional infantry which was now far superior to disorganised hordes of feudal knights. During the engagement Edward's son, called from his armour the 'Black Prince,' was hard pressed. A knight came to Edward on a hill top, asking for support. "*'Si' dit le Roy, 'Mon fils est il mort, ou à terre, ou blecé, qu'il ne se puisse aider?' Le chevalier repondit, 'Nenny, Sire, si Dieu plaist; mais il est en dur party d'armes.' Le Roy dit 'Or, retournez de vers luy et devers ceux que ci vous ont envoyé, et leur dites, de par moy, qu'ils laissent gagner a l'enfant ses esperons: je veuille que la journée soit sienne.'*"\*

After this important victory Edward marched on Calais. During its siege he received news of the death of David of Scotland at Nevill's Cross and of other minor successes in Guenne and Brittany. But it was a year before Calais surrendered, and Edward, angered at the delay and at his own losses, then condemned six of the principal citizens to death: "*Le Roy regarda sur eux despitement, car moult hayoit le peuple de Calais, et dist 'Soit fait venir le coupe-teste.' Adonques la Royne d'Angleterre, quie estoit moult enceinte, se meit a genous en plorant et dit 'Haa, gentil Sire, depuis que je repassay la mer en grant peril, je ne vous ay rien requis. Or vous prie humblement en don que pour le fils Sainte Marie, et pour l'amour de moy, vous veuillez avoir de ces six hommes mercy.' Le Roy regarda et se tint une piece: puis dit, 'Haa, Dame, j'aimasse mieux que vous fussiez autre part que cy. Vous me priez si acertes, que je ne vous puis econduire, si les vous donne a vostre plaisir.'*"†

Edward returned to England in a halo of glory bringing with him so much spoil "that everyone was

\* Froissart, i. 140.

† Ibid., i. 154-5.

dressed in fur or velvet" and for months his court was an Alexander's Feast. With the assistance of William of Wykeham he had begun rebuilding Windsor Castle, and in commemoration of King Arthur's Round Table and King Richard's Crusade he now instituted the Order of the Garter. At its inauguration he wore on his surcoat a silver swan with the motto, "Hey, Hey the wythe swan, By God's soul I am thy man." In the Great Wardrobe accounts there are various entries of "cloaks, hoods and jupons bordered with blue garters and buckles of silver gilt, of a bed decorated with the motto '*Honi soit qui mal y pense*,' and of garters given to the knights."\* Money flowed like water, and so universal was Edward's military fame that he was offered the crown of the Holy Roman Empire, a barren honour which he wisely declined. But almost immediately afterwards the population of England, the face of the country, and the whole fabric of society were shattered by the terrible scourge of the Black Death, an Asiatic plague which raged for two years and devastated the land. Its effects were felt for generations, for the resulting shortage of labour changed the old methods of agriculture and industry, unbalanced the relations of capital and labour, and led to repressive Acts of Parliament, strikes and the seeds of class warfare. Yet these new conditions came slowly and at first men were unaware of their meaning.

In 1349 Calais was besieged by the French. Edward, a pattern of chivalry, went to serve as a simple knight under the governor. Outside the walls he fought a single combat with a French champion, Eustace de Ribaumont, who brought him twice to his knees, though Edward at last beat him. Next day at a dinner given to his captives he called de Ribaumont "*le chevalier du monde qui mieulx sceet son corps deffendre*" and presented him with a collar of pearls, two horses, twenty *écus* and his liberty.† It was to deeds such as this that Edward's popularity was largely due, and by them he was able to maintain the national enthusiasm for his wars.

\* Lingard, iii. 206, note.

† Jean le Bel, ii. 181.

His next exploit was in August 1350, when he defeated the Spanish fleet off Winchelsea, his own galley being sunk in action, while the Queen watched the engagement from the city towers. Later on he recaptured Berwick and received the surrender of Balliol. In 1356 the Black Prince, after a bloody campaign in Guienne, defeated the French at Poitiers and took King John and many of his nobles prisoners. He brought them to England, and Edward thus held his two chief enemies captive, the King of Scots in the Tower, the King of France at Windsor. But though he ascribed his good fortune to Providence Edward's successes cost money. His buildings at Windsor, his royal guests, and his festivities and tournaments kept him always in debt. At last the Treaty of Bretigny was signed. The King of Scots was released for a ransom of £100,000 and the French King for 3,000,000 gold crowns, while Edward received Aquitaine and the lands round Calais in return for his claims on Normandy, Anjou and the crown of France.

During these years his large family had been growing up. In their alliances he followed a definite policy, increasing his power by the dowries and fiefs they secured. Lionel of Clarence he married to a de Burgh, Thomas of Gloucester to a Bohun, Edmund of York to a Spanish princess, and John of Gaunt to the heiress of Lancaster. By her the last-named prince became progenitor of the house of that name, the line of York descending from his two brothers Lionel and Edmund.

Edward was now fifty and ready to lead an easier life. William of Wykeham was his minister in England, the Black Prince his viceroy in France, while his own attention was given to hunting, building and banquets. In 1363 he entertained the Kings of France, Scotland and Cyprus, and the expenses of his court at this time averaged as much as £80 a day.\*

The peace did not last long. Disputes in Castile led to fresh hostilities, and in 1368 Edward resumed the title of King of France. But he deputed the conduct of the

\* Knighton, ii. 119.

war to his sons, and their campaigns were not successful. The French swept the Channel, burnt Portsmouth and threatened invasion, while Edward shewed little of his former energy. He had aged early and the last years of his reign were full of disaster.

In 1369 the Queen died of dropsy. The mother of eleven children she had long lost her looks, and Edward had consoled himself with mistresses. The chief of these was Alice Perrers, variously described as *nefanda meretrix*, *inverecunda pellex*, and "a married woman of distinguished wit and beauty." \* She exercised a baneful influence over the King and often over the government. "Unmindful of her sex and frailty she used to sit by the justices on the bench and by the doctors in the ecclesiastical courts persuading them to act against the law." † At a tournament in Smithfield she appeared "decked in the Queen's jewels as the Lady of the Swan, accompanying the King in a chariot and attended by many noble ladies"; and at her request even the Speaker was imprisoned, until the Commons managed to get her banished for a few months.

There were troubles both at home and abroad. The Black Prince returned from France broken in health; the Duke of Clarence was poisoned in Italy; the Duke of Lancaster, who had married as his second wife a princess of Castile, set up a barren and expensive claim to the crown of that country; and a fresh epidemic of the plague brought more famine, unemployment and discontent. Lancaster's foreign expeditions were especially unfortunate. In 1372 he lost Rochelle: the French then invaded Gascony; and within two years all that remained of the English gains in France were Calais, Bordeaux and Bayonne. Edward had become careless and senile, Wykeham was weak, and Lancaster was a political firebrand. Debts weighed on the King, taxes on the people and bribes on the court, while the preaching of Wyclif deeply disturbed the Church.

In June 1376 the Black Prince died leaving his only child Richard heir to the throne. Lancaster who was

\* Walsingham, 189, and Lungard, iii. 200. † Walsingham, 186.

just back from another costly campaign in Spain then dissolved the Good Parliament, turned out Wykeham and brought back Alice Perrers. A year later the King, who had grieved greatly at his son's death, fell ill from shingles. He was living in retirement at Shene and soon grew worse. His servants and his mistress left him, the latter taking even the rings from his fingers; and only a single priest was by him when he died on June 21st 1377 sadly muttering "*Miserere Jesu*." he was sixty-four and had reigned half a century. Edward was buried in a splendid tomb of gilt, marble and mosaic in Westminster Abbey. Of his legitimate children four survived him, the Dukes of Lancaster, York and Gloucester and the Duchess of Brittany. His bastards by Alice Perrers were Nicholas Litlington, Abbot of Westminster, and two daughters.\*

Edward III was a prince of varied attainments, speaking English and French and understanding Latin and German. In conversation he was ready and agreeable, always preserving the address and conventions of a knight and swearing by St. Mary. Merimuth calls him "affable, courteous, mild and pleasant to all, devoted to the ministers of God: tractable in affairs, provident and discreet in counsel, eloquent and full of tact, restrained and composed in his manners, sympathetic and patient. He was modest in prosperity and bore his losses lightly, generous and even prodigal, very honourable, but did not control his lust even in old age."†

Tournaments and field sports were his chief amusements and in France and Flanders he always kept a pack of hounds and a mews of hawks. He lived mostly at Windsor, Shene and Havering-atte-Bower when away from London. A lover of ceremonies, buildings and decoration in these he showed taste and magnificence. Windsor Castle was his creation. In religion he was practical: he went on pilgrimages and founded shrines, but he always resisted the Pope and regularly refused to become a vassal of Rome.

To women he was at once a master and a slave. His

\* Brayley, 239.

† Merimuth, 139; Walsingham, 190

mother had bequeathed him a temperament and an example which influenced him through life, and whether it was Queen Philippa, Lady Salisbury or Alice Perrers, feminine attractions easily vanquished his sterner senses. But chivalry was his ideal: it came before the interests of his people or his kingdom, and he regarded it as his *devoir* to shine in the lists or the field, to dress and entertain lavishly, to succour the distressed, to challenge and defeat his foes, to acquire and retain their dominions; for these objects the taxation of his subjects was a duty. Yet he was not without capacity for detail. In naval affairs he was peculiarly fortunate for he had the instincts of a mariner and "was as much at home on a cog as on a charger." He was the real founder of the English fleet, and his Parliament used to style him "King of the Sea." In his later years, oppressed by debts and indolence, he relaxed his vigilance and the coast towns suffered accordingly.

But though a good general, an active diplomat and a capable organiser Edward's talents were limited and definite rather than various or comprehensive. Much happened in his reign but it was not due to him. English became the language of Parliament and the courts; a national literature began; public spirit materialised, freedom of thought developed, industry and commerce assumed new forms. But through all these changes Edward remained a *reiter König*, only concerned with his country enough to collect its dues, levy its troops and repress its disorders. "The interest of his reign is scarcely proportioned to its length,"\* and his figure remains as Froissart paints it, a gay, debonair and generous knight, the cynosure of Europe in his youth, the lethargic libertine, feared or forgotten, in his later days.

Dowered at his birth with all the gifts of the gods, heir to a famous crown, bold, handsome and engaging, Edward began his career as a happy husband and father, the popular prince of his hereditary dominions. Gallantry, conquest and splendour enthralled him and in each he secured

\* Stubbs, ii. 407.



phenomenal success. He became the mightiest monarch in Christendom, the arbiter, host and keeper of kings, as famous for prowess and pride as for modesty and mercy. Then, midway through his life, a terrible blow fell upon his land, values altered, victories faded and his vitality sank into sloth. Conquest became tyranny, splendour extravagance and gallantry lust. His wife died, his sons fell away, his ministers quarrelled and his subjects repined, while Edward, still keeping something of his old sway over men and women, prosed in his empty palaces of hunting and hawking while he awaited a dull and deserted death.

“The scourge of Heav’n, what Terrors round him wait,  
Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,  
And Sorrow’s faded form, and Solitude behind.”





RICHARD II

From his picture in Westminster Abbey

## RICHARD II

1367-1400

RICHARD II was born at Bordeaux in the Abbaye de St. André on January 6th 1367. He was the second son of Edward Prince of Wales, eldest son of Edward III, by Lady Joan Plantagenet daughter and heiress of Edmund of Woodstock, a son of Edward I. Richard's father, the Black Prince, was famous for his courage and cruelty, his mother, the Fair Maid of Kent, for her fortune and beauty. The widow of Sir Thomas Holland, with whom she had eloped when he was steward to the Earl of Salisbury, she had gone after her second marriage with the Black Prince to Aquitaine where she remained for nine years. There her sons Edward and Richard were born, but in 1371 Edward died, and the younger boy Richard was then brought to England and educated under the care of Sir Guichard de l'Aigle and Sir Simon Burley who taught him the precepts of chivalry.

In 1376 the Black Prince died, and Richard was at once presented to Parliament by his grandfather as his heir apparent, and in November of that year he was created Prince of Wales and Duke of Cornwall. In January 1377 he opened Parliament in the King's name and in April he was made a Knight of the Garter with his cousin Henry Earl of Derby, son of the Duke of Lancaster. In the following June Edward III died, and Richard then succeeded to the crown being just ten years old.

There was at once a change in the government. The old King had left everything in the hands of his mistress Alice Perrers and his son the Duke of Lancaster, but the Black Prince's friends now returned to power. The country was nervous and unsettled. Plague, taxation and

the Lollards had left their mark. New ideas were about and a strong hand was needed at the helm.

On July 16th Richard was crowned. He was a forward and intelligent lad and was popular in the city where he was called 'the King of London.' A Council of eleven was chosen to govern "until he was of age to know good and evil"; his mother the Princess of Wales being given charge of him, though without any definite position; while Thomas Beauchamp Earl of Warwick, was appointed his guardian. His playmates were his two half-brothers, the Hollands, and Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, one of the greatest lords in the land.

At first matters went smoothly, though there was much unemployment and discontent with the landlords. Vagabonds flourished, democracy had taken root, and the teachings of Wyclif, a protégé of Lancaster's, had sown widespread heresy through the country.

In 1381 a poll tax of a shilling was levied, and a revolt immediately broke out in Kent, led by Wat Tyler 'a clever industrious man.'\* The insurgents marched on London and were admitted to the city. On June 13th, while Richard was at Mile End meeting some of them, others burst into the Tower, invaded the royal apartments, sat on his bed, tried to kiss his mother and murdered the Archbishop of Canterbury. Next morning Richard with Walworth, the Mayor, rode out to meet Tyler at Smithfield. Tyler took so insolent a line that Walworth suddenly struck him down. The mob, taken by surprise, were about to attack the King's escort when "as they were stringing their bows, Richard spurred his horse up to them and cried 'What is it, my men? What are you doing? Do not talk about wishing to shoot your King nor be sad about the death of a rogue and a traitor. I am your King, I will be your captain and leader. Follow me to the field and you shall have all you ask for.'"<sup>†</sup> This bold stroke carried the day; the rioters followed Richard until they were gradually surrounded by the loyal Londoners, and after he had

\* Walsingham, 264.

† *Ibid.*, 265.

signed charters freeing them from villenage they dispersed. A fortnight later the charters were revoked, and at the next assizes the ringleaders were sentenced to death. It was Richard's first experiment in government.

By the time he was sixteen Richard had become a striking figure, tall, handsome and golden haired, though somewhat effeminate in appearance. The Council, anxious for an alliance against France, now married him to Anne of Bohemia, a daughter of the Emperor Charles IV. She was still a child but full of wit and beauty, and though she brought her husband no children she always kept his love. Richard was already deep in domestic difficulties. He had three powerful uncles, one of whom Lancaster was believed to be aiming at the crown; while his half-brothers the Hollands gave constant trouble. The elder of these had murdered a friar for spreading tales about Lancaster; the Princess of Wales begged for his life, but he then killed a friend of Richard's in a fit of jealousy, and for this Richard swore to have him hanged. The threat so much upset their mother that a few days later she died. There was next a dispute between Richard and Lancaster as to a campaign in Scotland; and Richard, who was longing for independence, declared the Earl of March, a grandson of his uncle Clarence, heir to the throne. He also made his friend, de Vere, Marquess of Dublin, and his Chancellor, de la Pole, who was a merchant's son, Earl of Suffolk. These promotions damaged Lancaster's influence, and in 1386 he went off to Spain to press his claims on the kingdom of Castile. Richard, delighted at his departure, gave him and his wife two golden crowns.\*

Delivered from his uncle's presence he now began to do as he liked. He increased his household to 10,000 persons, made de Vere Duke of Ireland and would never meet Parliament. Angered at his extravagance the Lords and Commons demanded the removal of the Chancellor and Treasurer, to which Richard replied that he would not send away a scullion from his kitchen at

\* Knighton, ii. 207.

their request : \* and when they refused him supplies he threatened to call in the aid of France. Again Parliament remonstrated, saying that if taxes were unreasonable and advisers bad, Kings could be deposed. This rather cooled Richard, and at last he came up to Westminster and consented to their demands. The Treasurer was dismissed, the Chancellor impeached, and a committee was appointed to supervise the royal household and the government. Richard accepted these changes under protest ; but his enemies were strong and were ably led by his uncle Gloucester and his former guardian Warwick. He then went off to the west of England and travelled about the towns, trying to make himself popular and to secure the election of a favourable Parliament. He released Suffolk, recalled de Vere, and enlisted the help of Sir Simon Burley, his old governor, Archbishop Neville of York, Tressilian, the Chief Justice, and Nicholas Brember, a leading merchant of London. His plan was to procure a royalist House of Commons and then to revoke his concessions and govern by the court. But his opponents were just as determined, and their leaders, Gloucester, Warwick, Arundel, Nottingham and Derby, Lancaster's son, were important and dangerous men.

In November 1387 Richard returned to London with his wife, who was already hated as a foreigner. He had persuaded the judges to declare that the promises he had made were illegal, and his arrival was the signal for action. The five Lords Appellant as they were called had mustered troops, and the favourites were attacked in Parliament. They were as unpopular as the Queen, for Burley had brought her from Prague, while de Vere had put aside his wife to marry one of her maids of honour. De Vere was now defeated in the field by Gloucester and Derby, and with Neville and Suffolk he then fled abroad, where they all three died in exile. Brember, Tressilian and Burley were taken prisoners. After Christmas the five lords came up to London and had an interview with Richard in the Tower. They brought a large escort and insisted on having

\* Knighton, ii. 215.

the keys given them before entering. Richard received them "sitting in a tent, in a vineyard carpeted with cloth of gold,"\* and took them to his chamber, where he promised to grant their demands; Derby had shewn him from the outer wall the dense concourse of people that awaited his decision. But worse was to follow. Early in the new year the Merciless Parliament met. It deprived Richard of all power, expelled the Queen's Bohemian attendants, and condemned the three prisoners to death, though for three hours Anne on her knees begged Arundel for Burley's life. Richard's defeat was thus complete.

A new system of government was now set up, but it did not diminish expense or discontent. For a year Richard remained in retirement and then, when matters had quietened, he struck again. At midday on May 3rd 1389 he entered the Council room at Westminster and asked how old he was. He was told 'twenty-two.' "Then" said he "I should not be of less account than any other heir in England, since the law grants any man his full rights on his twenty-first year." With these words he took the great seal from the Chancellor and handed it to old Bishop Wykeham: he then dismissed the five lords from the Council, gave their offices to his own friends, and issued a proclamation that he had assumed the full government of the kingdom in his own person.†

This *coup d'état* was greeted with universal joy, and to celebrate it Richard held a tournament at Smithfield which lasted for twenty-four days. Sixty knights from all over Europe contended at it, and every means was taken to ensure its success. Truces were made with France, Scotland and Spain, the Lollards were excommunicated and an era of peace seemed to have dawned. Richard wrote to Lancaster asking him to return home, and in the autumn the duke arrived from Aquitaine. He managed to arrange terms between Richard and his opponents; and four of the five lords were then reinstated, while Archbishop Arundel, a brother of the earl, became Chancellor.

\* Knighton, ii. 255.

† *Ibid.*, ii. 310, and Rymer, vii. 617-8.



"For the next eight years the ministers seem to have enjoyed the confidence of Parliament, while Richard ruled as a constitutional and popular King." \* He was genuinely anxious to govern well, and Lancaster helped him. On St. Peter's Day 1390 the duke gave a great hunting party in Leicester Forest. Among his guests were the King and Queen, the Dukes of York and Gloucester, the Earls of Arundel and Huntingdon, many bishops, lords and ladies. The gathering lasted for five days and general amity seemed to have been restored.

But the constant difficulty of money still remained, and in 1392 Richard fell out with the Londoners over a loan. To punish them he took away their key and sword and appointed a royal warden to rule the city, while he moved his court to York. By the Queen's good offices however a reconciliation was come to which was celebrated by a grand procession from Shene to Westminster. At London Bridge one of the waggons containing the maids of honour overturned, leaving its occupants standing on their heads, much to the public amusement.† On arriving at the Temple the King said: "Peace to this city: for the sake of Christ, his Mother and my patron St. John, I forgive any offence." At Westminster a present of white palfreys was made to the royal couple, and the Queen then formally begged for the Londoners' pardon, which Richard granted saying to the Mayor "I will restore you my favour, for I prize the expense you have incurred, the gifts you have made me, and the prayers of the Queen. Henceforth avoid offence to your King and disrespect to his nobles. Preserve the ancient faith, despise the new doctrines unknown to your fathers, and defend the Catholic Church. Take back the key and sword and keep my peace in the city." ‡

Richard however had lost all his old popularity in

\* Stubbs, ii. 526-7.

† *Femora feminea dum sic sua femina nudat,  
Vix poterat risum plebs retinere suum.*

Maydiston, 40.

‡ Strickland, i. 610.

London, for although the country was suffering from poverty and pestilence the extravagance of his household continued to increase. "He entertained daily nearly 6,000 persons, not all poor: his kitchen alone employed three hundred servants, most of them in his livery and many ill conducted: and there were continual fights in the palace."\*

In June 1394 the Queen died, a terrible blow to her husband, who idolised her and whose best counsellor she had been. He mourned for her distractedly, had her apartments at Shene entirely dismantled, and gave her a magnificent funeral in Westminster Abbey. At this ceremony Lord Arundel, whom Richard had never forgiven and who had now quarrelled with Lancaster, appeared late and asked leave to go early. Richard, mad with grief and rage, seized a staff and hit him so hard on the head that he fell bleeding and senseless to the ground. There was the greatest confusion, a special service had to be performed to expiate the shedding of blood in a church, and it was dark before everything was finished.† The unfortunate event caused an immense scandal, and from this moment 'some obscure psychological change seems to have destroyed Richard's nerve and judgment'‡; for the rest of his reign he made almost every mistake possible.

To distract himself he went off in the autumn to Ireland and there during a stay of six months he succeeded in enforcing some order. But his expenses still rose, and bereft of his wife's advice he cast aside all restraint. He was childless, and it was urgent that he should have a direct heir; but he now proposed to marry the six-year-old daughter of Charles VI of France. He obtained addresses from Parliament begging him to assume autocratic powers which had never been exercised by any English sovereign before, and he gradually collected into his own hands the whole direction of government, insisting upon his 'regalitie.' He asked the Pope to canonise Edward II, and he brought over de Vere's body from Louvain and

\* Higden, 320 et seq. † Trokelowe, 424. ‡ Trevelyan, 254.

buried it with splendid obsequies, recalling the history of his own predecessor and Gaveston.

In September 1396 he went to Calais for his wedding to Isabella of France. It was his only visit abroad since boyhood, and in six weeks by unexampled profusion he spent £200,000. "Every day he wore different and more gorgeous clothes, while he gave the King of France gold and crystal cups and collars of pearls." King Charles, though not remiss in gifts, always appeared in a plain red velvet coat. During the journey home Richard lost much of his furniture in a storm, and this still further damaged his finances.

On arriving in London Richard as '*entier emperour de son royaume*' and without consulting Parliament ordered the legitimisation of Lancaster's children by his mistress Katherine Swynford, creating one of them Earl of Somerset. He then had his child bride crowned with exceptional extravagance. She was a charming little girl, beautiful and intelligent, and Richard treated her with genuine kindness and affection, but the talk of her attendants and what he had seen in France infected him with ideas of absolute rule. In the hope of being chosen Emperor he dispensed heavy bribes to the Electors, and he now "began to tyrannise, to spoil the people and to borrow large sums of money, so that no prelate, lord, citizen or town that was rich could hide their money from him." \*

These new methods of sovereignty presaged more serious acts. Whether he had been preparing for revenge it is impossible to say: modern historians have suggested that his lightly balanced mind suddenly slipped into madness; but when everything seemed quiet and prosperous "suddenly by the King's subtlety, levity and insolence the whole realm was disturbed." He had made an alliance with France; he had detached Nottingham from the other Lords Appellant over a private quarrel with Warwick: he had got Lancaster on his side by legitimatising his bastard children and had thus neutralised Derby: he had secured a new Chancellor and he had

\* Trokelowe, 200.

collected a considerable reserve of money. His future thus looked serene.

His recent marriage treaty however had surrendered Brest and Cherbourg to the French, and this had caused much discontent, people saying that "this Richard of Bordeaux cared more for France than for England and that he was going to give up Calais." Gloucester and Arundel were suspected of stirring up these rumours,\* and at a banquet an open quarrel had taken place between Richard and his uncle, the latter saying "Syre, ye oughte first to putte your bodye in devoyre to gete a towne or a castell by fayte of warre upon youre ennys er ye sholde selle or delyver any townes that your predecessors Kynges of Engelande have goten and conquered." †

For six months nothing happened: then, on July 10th, 1397, Richard invited Gloucester, Arundel and Warwick to dine with him at Westminster. Gloucester who lay ill at Pleshy in Essex excused himself, Arundel retired to his castle at Reigate, but Warwick accepted. Richard welcomed him and after dinner had him arrested. The same evening he sent to seize Arundel, swearing however that he should suffer no bodily harm. During the night he rode off himself with some London troops to Pleshy and there took Gloucester prisoner saying "Fair uncle, by St. John the Baptist what has been done will be best both for me and you." Gloucester was then privately despatched to Calais in the custody of his old ally Nottingham.‡

In September Parliament was summoned. Richard had assembled a large force of archers in his livery to overawe it; and the three prisoners were at once condemned to death. Warwick, on confessing his guilt, was exiled to the Isle of Man: Arundel was beheaded: and it was then announced that Gloucester had died in prison. It was true that he had lately been ailing, but the general belief was that he had been murdered.

\* "*Le roy sceut que le duc de Glostre et le conte d'Arundel en parloient, en voulant eslever le peuple contre luy.*" Trokelowe, 201; *Croniques de France*, 50.

† Higden, 324.

‡ Trokelowe, 202 et seq.

Having dealt with his enemies Richard proceeded to reward his friends. He made his half-brother Huntingdon, his nephew Kent and his cousins Rutland, Derby and Nottingham all dukes, so that the people in derision called them "dukettes." Again he seemed secure, though he was much troubled by Arundel's death, dreaming of him constantly, so much so that he had his body secretly buried for fear lest he should be thought a saint.\* But his tyranny increased to such an extent that Nottingham and Derby themselves grew afraid. Early in 1398 a treasonable conversation took place between them which Derby disclosed, and Richard to determine their guilt ordered them to meet in single combat. On September 16th, the anniversary of Gloucester's death, the lists were set at Coventry. There was a vast assemblage of people to view the contest, but just as the two champions were about to charge the King suddenly called off the fight and banished Derby for ten and Nottingham for a hundred years. They were obliged to submit, and when they had gone Richard at last seemed free from all his foes.

Almost at once however a new cloud arose. The heir presumptive to the throne, Richard's cousin the Earl of March, was deputy of Ireland and he now lost his life in a local skirmish. Richard swore to avenge his death and set about raising an army. He doubled his guards, forbade trial by jury, altered the rolls of Parliament, levied additional taxes, and ordered the sheriffs to receive orders under the royal signet as if they were under the great seal. At this time he wrote to the Byzantine Emperor that he "had reduced opposition to the root."†

In February 1399 the Duke of Lancaster died. Without a day's delay Richard deprived the absent Derby of his inheritance and banished him for life. At Whitsuntide he held a feast at Windsor, made his will and bade an emotional good-bye to his little Queen, who was ill from grief for a fortnight. He then set out for Ireland, a prey to fear, melancholy and exaltation. He left as Regent his uncle York, one of the few whom he still trusted. At his

\* Trokelowe, 322.

† Rymer, viii.

departure a hermit warned him from God to beware, to correct his life and to recall the exiles. Richard sent him to the Tower saying "If you are so familiar with God, go and walk on the water, so that He may know that you are His messenger."

Landing at Waterford Richard fought a successful campaign in Leinster, and in July he arrived in Dublin. There he received news that the new Duke of Lancaster had landed in Yorkshire and was marching on Bristol, that the Duke of York had joined him, and that the Council had fled from London. He sent for Lancaster's son, the future Henry V, a boy of eleven, whom he had brought with him as a hostage and said to him "See, Henry my son, what your father is doing to me. He is riding over my land like an enemy, imprisoning and destroying my subjects without mercy or reverence. Truly, my son, I am sorry for you, for because of this misfortune you may lose your inheritance." The lad excused himself, saying that he also was sorry but was innocent, and Richard, with fair words, then sent him off to Trim Castle.

But the danger had to be met, and after some delay Richard crossed over to Milford Haven. There he found the Welshmen against him; and being unable to move his troops through the mountains he disbanded them and rode with a small following towards Chester, where he expected to get fresh support. At Conway he met Archbishop Arundel and Henry Percy, sent forward by Lancaster who by now had many adherents. To them Richard offered to abdicate if he and eight of his friends might be assured of their lives and honourable treatment, and on August 20th he finally surrendered to Lancaster at Flint. By him he was escorted to Chester "riding on a sorry horse" \* and a fortnight later he was brought to Westminster and taken to the Tower. As he rode through the streets the people called him 'bastard,' † while Lancaster is said to have told him that he was not really the son of the Black Prince but of a canon of Bordeaux.

\* Trokelowe, 255.

† Ric. II. Trahison, 64.

On September 29th 1399 a committee of Lords and Commons visited Richard in the Council chamber at the Tower and received his formal abdication. But Parliament had determined also to depose him, and after reading to him a long list of his offences against the constitution they renounced their allegiance. Richard said that he hoped "hys cosyn wolde be good lord to hym." \* Next day Lancaster was chosen King as Henry IV.

The remainder of Richard's life is obscure. The Council ordered him to be confined for life in some secret place, to be served by persons hitherto unknown to him, and neither to send nor receive letters. He was taken first to Leeds Castle dressed as a forester, though he insisted on wearing a knight's gilt spurs. Thence he was moved to Yorkshire, and eventually to Pontefract, one of Henry's strongholds. Early in January 1400, his half-brothers, the Hollands, formed a conspiracy to murder Henry, but they were caught and executed. The news of this mishap threw Richard into a profound melancholy; while Henry said publicly at table that "Richard's life was his death and Richard's death his life." A month later the Council advised that if the late King were still living he should be securely guarded: on January 29th the King of France speaks of him in a letter as already dead. One report says that Richard abstained from food through grief until he could not eat, another that he was starved to death, a third that he was set upon at dinner by a band of ruffians, three of whom he brained with a stool, until at last he was killed fighting. It seems certain that by February 14th 1400 he had ceased to live. Later on his body was brought to London and publicly shewn, and it was then buried at Langley: in Henry V's time it was removed to Westminster. The news of his death caused little regret: "only the men of Bordeaux mourned for him for he had ever been a good lord to them."

Richard was just thirty-three and had reigned twenty-two years. He left no issue. His child Queen remained

\* Trokelowe, 286.

for two years in England, her dowry the subject of bitter quarrels between Henry IV and her father. She was then sent back to France where she married Charles, afterwards the poet Duke of Orleans, who was captured at Agincourt and spent twenty-three years in the Tower. She died in childbed in 1409 at the age of twenty.

There are pictures of Richard II in Westminster Abbey and at Wilton. He had sharp features with a short tufted beard: Adam of Usk calls him "fair as another Absalom." \* His complexion was white and flushed easily, and "his skull was of less than average capacity." † Froissart, who knew him, says that he could read and speak French well but that English was his ordinary language; he was probably the first King since the Conquest so to use it: he is also the first English sovereign of whom a written signature remains. His manners were abrupt and his speech embarrassed, and throughout his life he suffered from accesses of temper and of melancholy which have led his sanity to be questioned. Indolent, volatile and passionate but generous and artistic he was governed by his temperament, his antipathies and his friends. He read, wrote and talked incessantly: many documents of state bear the mark of his hand, and he used to make tedious speeches in Parliament. Yet he was a man of taste and cultivation, and his pictures, books, horses, clothes and jewels were the earliest signs of the Renaissance in England. Like Edward III he was devoted to pageants and to hunting; his servants all wore his badge of a white hart, and he always had a greyhound with him. He had also inherited his grandfather's love for building: Westminster Hall in its present state is mainly his work.

Of his religion little is known, but there is nothing against his moral conduct. From the age of sixteen to twenty-seven he lived in the closest intimacy and affection with his wife; there is no record of his having had any mistresses, and the suggestion that he was otherwise vicious appears to be entirely unfounded.

Several incidents in Richard's life have been preserved.

\* Usk, 137.

† D. N. B., xvi. 1043.



Gower, in his introduction to the *Confessio Amantis*, tells of meeting him on the river.

" *In Themse whan it was flowende,  
As I by bote came rowende :  
So as fortune her tyme sette  
My lyege lord perchaunce I mette,  
And so befell as I came nygh  
Out of my bote, when he me spygh,  
He bad me come into his barge.  
And when I was with hym at large  
Amonges other thynges seyde  
He hath this charge upon me leyde—  
And bad me do my busynesse  
That to his hygh worthynesse  
Some newe thyng I should boke  
That he hym selfe it myght loke  
After the form of my wrytyng.*"

In 1395 Froissart describes Richard turning over the leaves of a *livre d'amours* which he had laid on the royal bed. "*Il luy pleut tres grandement, et plaire bren luy devoit car il estoit enluminé, escrit et historié, et couvert de vermerl velour, a dix cloux d'argent, dorez d'or, et roses d'or au milieu, richement ouvriez. . . . Quand je me departi d'aveques luy (ce fut a Windesore) il me feit donner une gobelet d'argent doré, pesant deux marcs largement, et dedans cent nobles, dont je valu mieux depuis tout mon vivant.*" \*

Adam of Usk recounts Richard's talk in the Tower during his captivity. "I was present while he dined and I marked his mood and bearing having been taken thither for that purpose. And there and then the King discoursed sorrowfully in these words: "My God, a wonderful land is this and a fickle: which has exiled, slain, destroyed and ruined so many kings, rulers and great men, and is ever tainted with strife and variance and envy," and then he told the histories and names of sufferers from the earliest habitation of the kingdom." †

Born of an unhealthy stock, his maternal grandfather half-witted, his father diseased, Richard succeeded as a boy to the throne in difficult but not desperate

\* Froissart, iv. 184, 320.

† Usk, 182.

circumstances. His exchequer was empty and his people discontented but he had popularity, good looks and good will, for the Plantagenet family were ready to give him their support if he deserved it. But the departure of his uncle Lancaster and the flattery of favourites urged him to attempt independence, and this gave his factious lords the excuse to intervene. Without compunction they slew his friends and usurped his power. Richard bided his time and by a brilliant stroke retrieved all he had lost, so that for a space there was peace. But his enemies intrigued afresh, his wife's death shook him, and his visit to France inflamed his ideas of power. Again he struck with success and without mercy, and then, with almost incredible folly, he embarked on a mad burst of despotism which alienated his remaining friends, terrified his subjects, and mortally antagonised his most potent kinsman and rival. It earned him the name of Richard the Redeless and cost him his crown and his life. Yet through a chequered career Richard stands out as a fascinating and pathetic figure, lonely in his luxury, constant, courteous and brave. Pride and daring, love and sorrow, splendour and misery, blend to form a character that was fine though frail. Absolute power was a strain too strong for him to stand, and at the decisive moment his highly tempered spirit broke and he succumbed to a coarser but more practical foe.

## HENRY IV

1367-1413

HENRY of Bolingbroke, successively Earl of Derby and Duke of Lancaster, was born at the first-named place in Lincolnshire on 3rd April 1367. He was the eldest surviving son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and titular King of Castile, who was the fourth son of Edward III; while his mother was Lady Blanche Plantagenet, daughter and heiress of Henry Duke of Lancaster. He was thus the first King born and bred in England and with an English father and mother.

On the day of Henry's birth his father, who was fighting in Spain, won the victory of Najera over Henry of Trastamare, took prisoner du Guesclin the Constable of France, and restored King Pedro to the throne of Castile. Two years later Henry's mother died of the plague, and his father then married Constance, King Pedro's elder daughter, in whose right he afterwards took the title of King of Castile. Until 1376 the duke was usually engaged in military expeditions abroad but early in that year he returned to England; and on the death of his elder brother the Black Prince he took over the government, for the old King was becoming senile. On St. George's Day 1377 Henry of Bolingbroke with his cousin Richard, who was heir to the throne and almost exactly his own age, was admitted a Knight of the Garter. In the following July Edward III died, and at Richard's coronation Henry carried one of the three swords. Little is known of his early education, but he was brought up in the principles of Wyclif, a friend and *protégé* of his father's. With his sisters Philippa and Elizabeth he



HENRY IV

From his picture in the National Portrait Gallery



usually lived at the Savoy Palace in London or at one of his father's many country manors.

For a century the Lancaster tradition had been democratic, and they had supported the baronage against the Crown. But the accession of Richard II brought John of Gaunt very near to the throne—if the Salic Law applied he was the next heir—and as he was himself a candidate for the throne of Spain his policy became more royalist. His connection with Wyclif and his unsuccessful campaigns had made him unpopular, and he was not sorry to quit England in order to continue his Continental schemes. His young son was left behind as warden of the Lancaster duchy, and when about fourteen he was contracted to Lady Mary de Bohun, co-heiress of the last Earl of Hereford. Her elder sister Eleanor was already married to Henry's uncle Thomas of Woodstock, afterwards Duke of Gloucester, who had hoped by making Mary a nun to retain her estates.

In June 1381 during the Blackheath riots Henry was staying with his cousin King Richard at the Tower, and there he heard of the total destruction by the mob of his father's palace of the Savoy. It held much of the duke's goods, his plate, documents, wine and furniture: "and five large carts could barely carry the gold and silver vessels which were stolen."\*

In the autumn of 1383 Henry went with his father to Calais where the latter was negotiating a peace with France, and three years later he entered public life, acting as the duke's representative in Lancaster and fighting in the lists. He was short and red haired, not good looking though well formed, energetic, reserved and ambitious. When his uncle Gloucester and the other 'Lords of the Field,' Arundel, Warwick and Nottingham, began to oppose Richard, they induced Henry to join them. His position made him a powerful ally; and in the fighting against the King's favourites part of their forces was supplied from Henry's lands. At Radcot Bridge in December 1387 he was with the troops which

\* Knighton, ii. 135.

defeated de Vere, and after Christmas he came up to London and went with his confederates to the Tower to make terms with Richard. The five lords marched in "with linked arms" and Henry led his cousin up to the walls and showed him the host of people collected outside 'for the salvation of the King and the Kingdom.' When the interview was over Henry and Nottingham dined and stayed the night with Richard, though their colleagues declined the royal invitation. In the ensuing Parliament Henry spoke against the favourites, though more moderately than his friends, "but he opposed with all his power the execution of Burley, the King's former governor, for which reason there was a quarrel between him and Gloucester." \* He was soon made a member of the Council, for he was a prominent figure in the country, and he had one quality of special value, a flair for the winning side.

In May 1389 Richard made his first *coup d'état* and ousted the Lords Appellant from power; but by September Henry and Nottingham were back at the Council board. Two months later the Duke of Lancaster returned from Spain and advised his son to keep on good terms with Richard. Lancaster's position was not easy. He was by far the richest and most powerful prince of the blood, he knew that he was suspected of aiming at the crown and he was very ambitious. But he kept a correct attitude and did his best to ensure a stable government by supporting his nephew.

Following his father's advice Henry now devoted himself to activities less dangerous than his recent pursuits. He fought at tournaments in France and England, he fostered the love of the Londoners, and he acquired a reputation for piety by going on a crusade. With three hundred followers he sailed for Danzig in July 1390, took part with the Teutonic Knights in several raids against the Russians and penetrated as far as Vilna. But though he distinguished himself in the field and entertained lavishly he did not get on with the Prussians, and he soon returned to England.

\* Walsingham, 365.

In the following year he went back to Danzig, "but as he found his reception from the lords of the country not so friendly as he had wished," he went on to Venice and Jerusalem,\* making one of the earliest grand tours on record. Leaving Danzig in September 1392 he stayed ten days at Prague, visiting King Wenceslaus. In November he arrived at Vienna where he was the guest of the Archduke of Austria, while the King of Hungary "loaded him with presents and generously supplied him with victuals."† At Venice the Doge met him and lodged him in his palace. Christmas he spent at Zara and sailing thence by Crete and Rhodes to Jaffa he rode as a pilgrim up to Jerusalem. In February 1393 he went to Cyprus and then returned to Venice, where he was again nobly entertained: Capgrave says that the Doge accompanied him on the whole tour. By July Henry was back in England. His time had been usefully spent in seeing new people and places on the Continent, and he had avoided the domestic strife at home. He now joined his father in a moderate support of Richard, but in the main he adopted a neutral line and kept clear of politics.

In June 1394 Henry and Richard both lost their wives: but while the former had a young family the latter was left childless. Two years later Richard married Isabella of France, a girl of six, which meant that for ten years there could be no direct heir to the crown. He also legitimatised Lancaster's issue by his mistress Katherine Swynford, a family of three brothers who were only a few years younger than Henry. Proposals were made for an alliance between Henry and a French princess, for his nearness to the crown made him an important match: two of his sisters were already Queens, one married to John of Portugal and another to Henry of Castile.

In the summer of 1397 Richard struck a second blow at his political opponents by arresting Gloucester, Arundel and Warwick. Arundel was arraigned before Lancaster as High Steward, and at the trial an altercation

\* Capgrave, 104, History of the Illustrious Henries.

† *Ibid.*, 105.



took place between him and Henry. Henry asked Arundel "Didst thou not say to me at Huntingdon where we were gathered to revolt, that it would be better first to seize the King?" Arundel replied "Thou Earl of Derby thou liest at thy peril!"\* The King then intervened; Lancaster passed sentence, and Arundel was immediately executed. Meanwhile Gloucester had been murdered at Calais and Warwick sent into exile. Henry and Nottingham, the last of the Lords Appellant, had remained on Richard's side; ten days later he made them Dukes of Hereford and Norfolk respectively.

Richard had now become so powerful that even his friends were growing nervous. In 1398 while riding from Brentford to London, Norfolk told Henry that Richard was not to be trusted. Henry shared his friend's fears, but realising the danger of such words he reported the conversation to his father and the King, much as he had done before. He then made a formal charge against his old ally; and after the two had been for a time under arrest Richard decided that the matter should be fought out by ordeal of battle. The trial was to be at Coventry, and tremendous preparations were made, spectators flocking in from all parts of the country. The combatants had ordered special armour and a fight to the death was expected. Against Norfolk public feeling was strong, for he was credited with Gloucester's murder; while Richard thought he stood to profit whoever won. But when the day came Henry was so evidently the popular champion that Richard cancelled the fight and banished both combatants, Henry for ten years and Norfolk for life. Ill advised as this action seems Richard was probably right in suspecting his cousin's loyalty. For twenty years the House of Lancaster had been casting their eyes on crowns, and though their claim to Castile depended on female descent, while that to England ignored it, they were active and dangerous rivals to an unstable prince like Richard. Yet it is remarkable

\* Usk, 158.

that Henry's father acquiesced in his exile. Perhaps the two disagreed about policy, perhaps the duke knew of his son's guilt, perhaps both were already planning for the future. The truth is undetermined.

In October Henry left England, escorted by the Londoners, pensioned by the King, and welcomed by the French. He was an even more important figure than hitherto, for the Earl of March, the heir presumptive to the throne, had just been killed in Ireland, leaving only a child to represent him. Four months later the Duke of Lancaster died. Henry, who was in Paris, at once applied to Richard for his father's inheritance; but Richard refused it, banishing him for ever and confiscating all his lands. To Henry this was vital. His children, his wealth and his future lay in England: he had already seen most of his allies exiled or slain: he now saw his family, his possessions and his prospects taken from him. From the first prince in England he was to become a man of no account.

“ For you have fed upon my signories,  
Disparked my parks and felled my forest woods,  
From my own windows torn my household coat  
Razed out my impress, leaving me no sign  
Save men's opinions and my living blood,  
To show the world I am a gentleman.”

Now or never he had to make his choice. Archbishop Arundel, who had been deprived of his see, hastened with his nephew, the young earl, to France. They found Henry in a château near Paris and told him how popular he was in London, how ready for revolt was the country, how Richard had gone to Ireland. “ *Et quand le Comte D'erby eut ouy, si ne repondit point si tost, mais s'apuya sus une fenestre, qui regardoit dedans les jardins, et pensa une espace, en mainte imagination, et quand il se retourna devers l'archevesque, il dit sire, vos parolles me donnent a penser.*” \* He did not delay long. With the Arundels and Percies, themselves just banished, he

\* Froissart, iv. 298.

sailed from Boulogne and on July 15th 1399 he landed at Ravenspur in Yorkshire. The news of his arrival spread quickly, and though he protested that he had only come to claim his duchy, the countryside flocked to meet him. Within a few days he was joined by his uncle the Duke of York who was acting as Regent during Richard's absence, and his force soon grew to 100,000 men. Marching to Bristol he seized and executed some of Richard's councillors and on August 9th he reached Chéster. Here he was in his own territory, for he was a great landowner in Wales and its borders. Richard meanwhile had hurried back from Dublin, but he was without troops. He fled to Flint, and seeing that his cause was lost he then promised to abdicate. Henry at once brought him up to London and lodged him in the Tower.

On September 30th 1399 Parliament met in the Great Hall at Westminster. The throne was empty, and Henry sat in the first place on the dukes' bench. After the abdication and deposition of Richard had been agreed to Henry rose and crossing himself said: "In the name of God, I, Henry of Lancaster, challenge this roiaume and the crowne with alle the membres appurtenance thereto as be the ryght blood comyng of the Kyng Henry and thorghe that ryght that Gode of hys grace hath sent me, with the help of my kyn and of my frendes, to recovere it: the which roiaume was in poynt to ben undon, for defaute of governaunce and undoyng of the lawes."\* Both Lords and Commons at once acclaimed him as King, and Archbishop Arundel led him to the throne. There, after praying and kneeling, he seated himself saying "Syres, I thank you espiritiuelx and temporelx and alle the estates of the land, and I do yow to wyte, that it ys nought my wil that no man think that by wey of conqaist y wolde desherte any man of hys heritage, fraunchis, or other ryghtes that hem oughte to have and hath had in the gode lawes of this roiaume, except hem that have ben ageyn the gode purpos and the commone profyte of the reiaulme."† This pronouncement

\* *Annales Ricardi II*, 281.

† *Ibid.*, 281.

satisfied the waverers. Nothing was said in favour of the late King or of his heir the young Earl of March; but to add to the strength of Henry's parliamentary title rumours were spread about that Richard was a bastard and that Edmund of Lancaster, Henry's ancestor, had been the elder brother of Edward I. Henry however needed no such tricks to help him. He had just marched victoriously across the kingdom, by male descent he was the first prince of the blood, the Regent and the Church supported him, he was related to all the principal barons and he held in his own right the earldoms of Lancaster, Lincoln, Leicester, Hereford, Nottingham and Derby.

On October 13th 1399 he was crowned, being anointed with a chrism said to have been given to Thomas Becket by the Virgin Mary. Next day a new Parliament met, and after some insults, challenges, gloves and hoods had been flung across the floor of the House, Richard's half-brothers the Hollands were degraded from their dukedoms, while Henry's friends were given the principal offices of state, and his eldest son was created Prince of Wales.

The new King kept his Christmas at Windsor "quietly and without joy," for his family were recovering from a severe illness said to have been contracted from poison. In January 1400 an attempt was made by the Hollands to entrap him, but he got the news just in time "brought by the Mayor and one of his own retainers from the London stewes." In the winter night Henry rode almost alone from Windsor to the Tower, placed his sons in safety there and collected some troops. The conspirators were quickly caught; and their deaths were followed by that of Richard, who was murdered, by whose order is not known, at Pontefract. Henry, always punctilious about religious duties, attended his funeral and had masses sung for his soul.

During the following summer and autumn Henry made two indecisive attacks on Scotland and Wales, to curb revolts instigated by the King of France, Richard's father-in-law. Later on he received an expensive visit from the Byzantine Emperor Manuel Palæologus, who

came begging for help against the Turks. Henry gave him 3,000 marks but no troops, for his hereditary revenues large as they were could not finance his own kingdom. He was already short of money, and as his household foraged without payment, he was rapidly losing his popularity. In 1401 there was a plot to kill him, "an iron trident with three long and sharp points being found hidden in his bed,"\* and soon afterwards a 'conspiracy of priests and Lollards' led to the first heretic being burnt in England.

Next year Henry led a second expedition against the Welsh, but again with little success. The Scots then produced a pretender who they said was Richard escaped from prison, but he was defeated by the Percies. Yet the rumours grew, and "much people desyred to have Richard Kynge again."

To strengthen himself against the French Henry now married Joan of Navarre, daughter of Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, and widow of John Duke of Brittany. She was about his own age, rich and powerfully connected, but the alliance did not get him control of her duchy; and he still remained at enmity with the King of France who bitterly resented his usurpation and his treatment of Richard's wife: he would only speak of Henry to the English ambassador as "*le seigneur qui vous a envoyé*."† Henry well realised the insecurity of his position and strove to bring the peers and prelates to his side. He was related to many of the former and introduced the style of calling them his cousins. His half-brothers, the Beauforts, stuck closely to him, and the best of them, Henry, he now made Chancellor and Bishop of Winchester.

He was already learning the weight of a crown. Less tyrannous and less revengeful than his predecessor he was already more disliked. His domestic foes were fewer but his friends had taken their place; and the Bohuns and Bigods of earlier days were replaced by the Nevilles and Percies who ruled as princes in the north. Northum-

\* Annales Henrici IV, 338.

† Lingard, iii. 410, note.

berland and his son Hotspur had managed the campaign in Scotland and had borne much of its cost. They had captured the Earl of Douglas and they coveted his estates, but the King thought differently, so to coerce him Hotspur and his brother-in-law Mortimer threatened to proclaim the young Earl of March, who was confined at Windsor, as heir to the crown. Richard's badge of the white hart was distributed among the Welsh, and a dangerous insurrection broke out. In a battle at Shrewsbury so hard was the fight that the King's guards were dispersed, his banner beaten down and the Prince of Wales wounded. Henry himself, who had two knights dressed in the royal armour to personate him, was hard pressed, but he killed thirty men, and on Hotspur being slain he rode into the enemy's lines shouting "Henry Percy is dead, St. George, victorie." \* This success brought about the surrender of Northumberland and the submission of Wales.

In 1404 the 'Unlearned' Parliament, *i.e.* without a lawyer in it, met at Coventry. It checked the expenses of the royal household and relying on Henry's parliamentary title insisted on freedom of speech in return for subsidies. Henry protested against the number of its messages and said that "Kings were not used to render accounts," † but in the main he deferred to its wishes. By his system of government, known as the 'Lancastrian experiment,' King and Parliament were to rule together. It developed to some extent the democratic traditions of his house; but it involved concessions to the Commons by admitting their taxing powers, to the Lords by humouring their wish for war, and to the Church by persecuting heresy. The strain and worry told upon Henry, and his conscience always vexed him. In this year he began to suffer from syncope and sciatica aggravated by shingles, and gradually he became an invalid. Plots and pretenders pursued him. In 1405 Northumberland and Archbishop Scrope of York started a rebellion in the north. Henry with Archbishop Arundel of Canterbury defeated them,

\* Ann. Hen. IV, 368, and Usk, 253.

† Lingard, iii. 465.

and while he was breakfasting at Bishopsthorpe with one Primate the other was beheaded in a field outside. In a brilliant campaign he then reduced the Welsh, but want of money, parliamentary struggles and bad health had weakened his spirit. Political parties began to form. The government side was led by Henry's half-brothers the Beauforts; while Archbishop Arundel and his relations directed the opposition. Taxation, Lollards and the royal household were the subjects of dispute, and the position was aggravated by Henry's illness. "He lost the beute of his face: and as commonne opinion went, unto his deth he was a lepir and evyr fowlere and fowlere." \*

In 1408 he had so severe a fit that he was thought to be dead, but he refused to consent to a regency. Unable to walk or ride and always ailing, he now turned to religion, his chief interests lying in the claims of the rival Popes and in a pilgrimage to Jerusalem which he wished to perform. True to the Plantagenet tradition he was at variance with his eldest son, who did not get on with the Queen and whom he suspected of aiming at the throne. Once while his father was lying senseless on his bed the Prince it is said, took the crown from its place and put it on. The King recovering saw him and said "Fair son, how will you have any right to it, for I never had, as you know well." "Sir," replied the youth "As you have kept it by the sword so will I do." †

In the winter of 1412 Henry was again dangerously ill, but he struggled up to Westminster and there while praying before St. Edward's shrine in the Abbey he had another fit. He was carried into the Abbot's house, and on asking where he was he was told "in Jerusalem" which was the name of the chamber. He at once recalled a prophecy that he should die in Jerusalem, and turning to his son he said, "Behold thy father who once was strenuous in arms but now is adorned only with bones and nerves. His bodily strength is gone, but spiritual strength hath come to him." As he lay dying Henry's confessor urged him specially to repent for three

\* Capgrave, 121, note.

† Monstrelet, i. 164.

things; "one for the deth of Kyng Richard, the other for the deth of Archbishop Scrop, the third for the wrong titil of the crowne." Henry answered "For the two first poyntes I wrote onto the Pope the veri breath of my conscience: and he hath sent me a bulle with absolucion and pennans assigned, which I have fulfilled. And as for the third poynt, it is hard to sette remedy: for my children will not suffire that the regalie go out of oure lynage."\* On March 20th 1413 he died being nearly forty-six and having reigned thirteen years: "he had been poisoned and tormented for five years by an itching of the flesh, a drying up of the eyes and a rupture of the intestines with such a growth of lice on his head that he could not have it uncovered."† He was buried at Canterbury.

By his first wife Henry left four sons; Henry V who succeeded him, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, John, Duke of Bedford, and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. His daughters were Blanche married to Louis, Count Palatine, and Philippa to Eric, King of Sweden. By his second wife he had no issue: she survived him twenty-four years and died at Langley.

The portraits of Henry IV shew him as square set and ruddy, with a short rough beard and a frowning expression. He had none of the good looks of his family but he was a man of considerable attainments, knowing English, French and Latin well and extending his patronage to Chaucer, Gower and several Continental poets. Many of his despatches to foreign potentates are evidently his own composition. He writes to the Emperor of Abyssinia, 'Prester John,' expressing his wish to visit the Holy Sepulchre again; to the King of Cyprus recalling their former friendship; to the Greek Emperor, to the Doge of Venice, and even to the son of Tamerlane thanking him for his support of Christians in the East.‡

As a young man he had been a redoubtable swordsman in the lists, and he was always forward in battle. In religion he was regular and orthodox and he grew intolerant

\* Capgrave, 124, note.

† Usk, 248.

‡ Royal Letters of Hen. IV, 420-8.



in later life only through policy. After his health broke down he became very devout. His will written in 1410 begins, "I, Henry, sinful wretch that I am." In his private life he was temperate, chaste and sober. Of some eloquence, ready in reply and keenly devoted to business he dealt competently with affairs, and though naturally quick tempered and usually short of money he was more merciful than most of his contemporaries and not often mean. But beyond this his character had little attraction. The son of an ambitious and selfish father he was always looking for success: he joined his friends last and left them first; he rarely hesitated to betray a secret and he let others do work from which he recoiled himself. He had learnt early to conceal his aims, and being neither impulsive nor confiding he was content to wait until his rivals disappeared. His seizing the crown benefited the country, but it left him even colder and more suspicious than he had been before.

Love played little part in his life. He never knew his mother; he saw little of his father: during most of his first marriage he was abroad and during most of his second he was ailing: he seems never to have had a mistress, and he quarrelled with his eldest son. As King he found it more difficult to govern than it had been to oppose, and he passed his days in a wearing effort to maintain himself. That he did this successfully, ill and unpopular as he was, is a proof of his ability and courage. Efficiency was his chief asset.

With some semblance of justice Henry had dethroned his cousin, and wisely though perforce he had allowed Parliament to regulate the succession. With the example of Richard to avoid he chose good ministers, eschewed favourites, deferred to Church and State and ruled with firmness and moderation. Yet he inspired neither affection nor respect; self-repression and materialism had brought their own reward. His caution saved him; but both for himself and his country his reign was 'the unquiet time,' spent in fighting to keep a crown which had been acquired by very dubious means.





HENRY V

From his picture in the National Portrait Gallery

## HENRY V

1387-1422

HENRY V was born at Monmouth on August 9th 1387, the eldest son of Henry of Bolingbroke, afterwards Duke of Lancaster and King of England, by his wife Lady Mary de Bohun, daughter and heiress of Humphrey last Earl of Hereford. His nurse was Joan Waring of Courtfield; and before he was ten years old a harp, a sword and some books were bought for him. In 1394 his mother died, and four years later his father was banished. Henry with his three brothers and two sisters remained in England under the care of King Richard II, who treated him well and in 1399 took him on his expedition to Ireland and there knighted him.

When Richard received the news of Lancaster's landing in Yorkshire he called the boy before him and told him that the business might cost him his inheritance. Henry answered boldly that he was innocent and hoped the King would allow it; and Richard then sent him to Trim where he remained a prisoner until his father's venture had succeeded. He was then brought over to London, and at Henry IV's coronation he carried the sword Curtana, being afterwards created Prince of Wales, Duke of Lancaster and Aquitaine, and Earl of Chester. At Christmas at Windsor he suffered from an attack of poisoning, from which he took some time to recover; and soon after this he seems to have gone to Queen's College, Oxford, where the room which he occupied used to be shewn. While there he is reported as wearing "a gown of blue satin full of oilet holes, at every hole the needle hanging by a silk thread."\* His father's half-brother Henry Beaufort, who was Chancellor of Oxford,

\* Luders, 148.

had a share in his education ; and from his earliest youth Henry wrote and spoke French well. He also acquired a good knowledge of music, and in tilting, hunting, hawking and all forms of sport he excelled.

In 1400 Henry went with his father to the Welsh campaign and on its conclusion he was left at Chester in nominal command of the frontier. His chief companion was Henry Hotspur ; and the latter's uncle Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester, now became his tutor. For three years Henry remained in the west, learning the lessons of soldiering and administration. At the Battle of Shrewsbury in July 1403 he distinguished himself by his daring. He was wounded in the face by an arrow and was thought to be in danger, but when his attendants wished to take him out of the line he said " How will others fight if they see me, a prince, the King's son, leaving the field for fear ? Lead me wounded as I am to the front so that I may encourage my fellow soldiers not only by my words but by my deeds, as a leader should." \*

As a boy Henry had so trained himself in bodily exercises that he could run as fast as a deer.† He was slim, good looking, dark haired, with a ruddy complexion, a prominent nose and a thin, narrow face. His capacity was already so marked that Parliament repeatedly asked for him to be left in control of the Welsh frontier, and there, except for a short expedition to Scotland, he remained until 1407. His letters to his father were often in a devout strain. Detailing a fight he says : "*La victoire n'est pas en la multitude de peuple mais en la puissance de Dieu : notre seul prisonnier est un grant chiefteyn qui ne poet chivacher uncore a son aise.*" ‡

When he was about twenty his father's illness forced Henry to be more often in London, and he then began to take part in the government. He was made Warden of the Cinque Ports, Constable of Dover and Captain of Calais, and by 1410 he was virtually Regent. He lived at Poultney Manor in the city or at the Palace of Shene. In his conduct of affairs his principal supporters were

\* Vita Henrici V, 3.

† Ibid., 3.

‡ Rymer, x. 390.

his uncles Henry, now Bishop of Winchester, and Thomas, Duke of Exeter, while his political opponents were the Church party led by Archbishop Arundel. The main domestic question was the treatment of heretics. There was already considerable feeling against the large revenues of the bishops and abbots, while the new doctrines of the Lollards had unsettled men's opinions. The hierarchy was alive to the danger and anxious to repress it, and though Henry did not care for persecution he found himself forced to it: on one occasion he was present at the burning of a Lollard whom he vainly begged to recant and offered to pension. In foreign politics there was a similar difference of view. France at this time was torn by internal strife between the houses of Burgundy and Orleans, and while the popular party in England favoured the former, the Church preferred the latter. There was thus a constant division in Parliament and in the Council.

The King's illness had increased, and efforts were made to induce him to abdicate in favour of his son; but these so enraged him that he broke entirely with his brothers, the Beauforts, and relieved the Prince from attendance at the Council. In 1412 the latter therefore retired from court and for twelve months he remained in the background; but in the following spring his father became so seriously ill that he again returned to London, and the two were then reconciled.

On March 20th 1413 the King died, and Henry succeeded to the throne. His youth had been neither virtuous nor vicious: with his brothers he had led the ordinary life of a young noble of his day. The legend of his striking Chief Justice Gascoigne for punishing one of his friends and of his being sent to prison is almost certainly false: that of his taking the crown when his father was unconscious is probably true. But on his accession he put aside all his old amusements, regretting "that so much of his life had been covered by the black smoke of misconduct and swearing that he would rather be buried than crowned if he were not to benefit his country." \*

\* Vita Henrici V, 5.

His coronation took place in a snowstorm; after it he appointed his uncle the bishop to be Chancellor and released from custody his cousin the Earl of March; while he shewed his piety and patriotism by translating King Richard's body from Langley to Westminster and by making St. George's and St. Dunstan's Days holidays.

The power of the Crown was less at this time than it had been for some years. Henry IV had got his title and his money from Parliament and had enjoyed considerable support from the Church. In return he had had to grant concessions to both. To continue this assistance the new King promised to repress the Lollards, while to conciliate his nobles he held out hopes of a war. The moment was propitious, for the French under the weak rule of Charles VI were distracted by faction. Henry's natural bent was for arms, and he burned to distinguish himself in a foreign campaign, leaving the clergy to cope with heresy at home. By reviving his grandfather's claims on the French crown he proposed at once to justify the pretensions and secure the safety of his own line. He had practical experience of warfare, he had a loyal country behind him, and he was active, able and courageous.

In May 1414 he sent an embassy to Paris demanding the restoration of Normandy, Anjou, Maine and Touraine, with the hand of the Princess Katherine. The Dauphin's reply was a barrel of tennis balls, as a game more suitable to Henry than fighting.\* Henry replied that the balls he would bring would batter down the walls of Paris. Preparations for war were begun, while Henry spent his holiday in laying out a garden at Kenilworth "in a place full of thorns and foxes which he called 'Plesant Maris.'" The Commons tried to dissuade him from his enterprise, but he persisted in it. He had the coast

\* *Dalpinus Regis Francorum filius, illi  
Carolus ascripsit verba jocosâ nimis,  
Parisiusque pilas misit quibus ille valeret  
Ludere cum pueris ut sua cura fuit.*

patrolled, appointed his brother Bedford as Regent, and by July 1415 he was ready to start. At that moment a conspiracy was discovered to put his cousin March upon the throne. Henry crushed it quickly; and its leaders, including another cousin the Earl of Cambridge, were executed; but March himself was held to be innocent and was pardoned.

In August 1415 Henry sailed for Harfleur with his brothers Clarence and Gloucester, some 1,500 ships and 30,000 troops. He took with him a large and efficient siege train; and after a six weeks' investment, in which his army suffered severely from fever and dysentery, the town capitulated. Henry then challenged the Dauphin to settle their differences by personal combat, but receiving no reply he sent his sick and wounded back to England and in October started 'with calculated rashness' to march across country to Calais. He had now only 15,000 men. Heralds from the French asked him to fix a day of battle and to say by which road he was going; Henry answered "by the straightest" and that if his enemies sought him it would be at their peril.

On October 25th the armies met at Agincourt. Henry's troops were far the fewer and much fatigued: *moult lassez, travaillez de faim, de froid et d'autres necessaires*.\* They were also without tents, bread or water. "As the weather was very wet they rested in the rain, with only walnuts for food; but they spent the night sounding their trumpets, praying and confessing their sins." Before dawn Henry visited them, summoned them early to matins† and gave them the best breakfast he could. "Be a gode cher" he said "and ablowe yourselves and revele you well." All were full of hope and pluck, anxious to fight at once, while the French were for delay, expecting reinforcements. In the morning the English took up their position, the archers being in front, every man with a pointed stake to check the cavalry. Henry rode a grey charger, and wore his crown over a steel helmet, with a surcoat bearing the arms of

\* Monstrelet, i. 227.

† Capgrave, 133.



France and England. He was animated and confident, and when Lord Hungerford said that he wished for 10,000 more of the best archers in England, Henry replied "You speak like a fool: by God in Heaven, on whose grace I trust and in whom is my firm hope of victory, I do not wish for one more than I have." This is God's people whom I have here. Do you not think that God with this scarcity of strength can vanquish the pride of the French who are glorying in their numbers and power." \* To his men he said "Now is good time, for all England prayeth for us and therefore be of good cheer and let us go on our *journée*." As his standard was raised he cried "In the name of God Almighty avaunt banner, and St. George this day be thine help."

The French were 60,000 strong in three divisions, their columns thirty deep; while the English were but four deep. So short of troops was Henry that he could only spare ten men-at-arms and thirty archers as a guard for his baggage and wounded. At eleven the battle began. The first division of French knights in their heavy mail had been ordered not to charge, but they could not be held back and were soon bogged in the soft ground and shot down. Henry then attacked their second line. His brother Clarence was wounded and overthrown, and Henry fought across his body until it was rescued. He was himself felled by a mace, but his guard surrounded him. The Duke of Alençon, the French commander, forced his way to the English standard, beat down the Duke of York and struck at Henry, but he was slain, and the second French division fell back. A charge of the English then drove the third line off the field and the battle was won. There was much slaughter but little pursuit, for the English were in no condition for it. Eight thousand French knights and squires, three hundred *grands seigneurs* and three dukes, with the Constable and Admiral of France, were killed: of the English only 1,600 fell among whom were the Duke of York and Lord Suffolk.

\* *Gesta Henrici V*, 47, 49.

During the fight Henry's baggage had been raided by peasants, and he lost "two of his crowns and signets"

On October 29th he arrived at Calais and a fortnight later he crossed to England. The passage was so rough that the prisoners in the royal galley said it was worse than any battle and they marvelled at a King who was not incommoded by such weather.\* Henry was met in London by a long and splendid ovation, "but he rode with a serious look as if he was thinking and made humble offerings at St. Paul's.† After Christmas with great reverence he went on foot as a pilgrim from Shrewsbury to St. Winifred's Well in Wales."‡

In the following spring the Emperor Sigismund arrived in England to negotiate a peace. He stayed four months, was lavishly entertained at Windsor and was made a Knight of the Garter; but his mission failed, and eventually he and the Duke of Burgundy joined Henry. Henry's victory had whetted his ambition and he was already preparing for a fresh campaign.

His position with Parliament was now much strengthened, and supplies were granted him with alacrity. More ships were built, a new army assembled, and when in July 1417 he again embarked for Harfleur he took with him 50,000 men. His progress was rapid. He first reduced Normandy, taking Caen, Bayeux and Alençon, while his generals captured Coutances and Evreux. With Lower Normandy in his power he moved along the Seine by Pont de l'Arche, and in the summer of 1418 he laid siege to Rouen, one of the richest and best-defended cities in France. Henry invested it regularly, saying that war had three handmaids, Fire, Blood and Famine, and that he was employing the mildest of them. Not until January however did Rouen capitulate, after 12,000 *bouches inutiles* had been expelled. Henry refused to let these non-combatants pass through his lines, and they perished between the trenches and the walls. But on the city's surrender he gave the French men-at-arms their liberty, took only 300,000 crowns from the burghers

\* Vita Hen. V, 22. † Liber Metricus, 128. ‡ Usk, 313.

and after entering Rouen in triumph "followed by a page bearing a fox's brush and a pennon on a spear," he at once arranged for feeding the inhabitants.

Negotiations began, and Henry now met the Princess Katherine. At their first interview he kissed her and her mother and talked long with them, *moult désirant de l'avoyr en mariage, car elle estant moult belle et de gracieux maniere*.\* But he went on consolidating his conquests in Normandy, and during the summer the capture of Mantes and Pontoise opened the way to Paris. In September 1419 the Duke of Burgundy was murdered at Montereau by the Dauphin's party, and to get his revenge the new duke agreed to recognise Henry as King of France. By April 1420 preliminaries of peace were agreed on, and a month later Henry went to Troyes. He had 7,000 troops with him and on arriving he published an order that they "should only drink the local champagne diluted with water, being unused to it."† At his public betrothal to Katherine "he wore in his helmet a fox's tail ornamented with precious stones."‡ The treaty was then signed, its conditions being that Henry should be Regent of France until the death of Charles VI, when he was to succeed to the French throne. On June 2nd he was married, and two days later he left to go on pacifying the country. On December 1st he entered Paris in state with King Charles, and he remained at the Louvre for Christmas. He then returned to Rouen, and in February 1421 he arrived with his Queen in England. Three weeks later she was crowned at Westminster.

During the spring Henry made a progress through the midlands, visiting several shrines. "He found the country peaceable and well governed, for during his absence Oldcastle the Lollard leader had been captured and beheaded." But while away in the north he heard of the defeat and death at Beaujé of his brother Clarence. He at once posted to London, got fresh grants from Parliament, though not without complaints, and in June

\* Monstrelet, i. 276. † Vita Hen. V, 37. ‡ Gesta Hen. V, 37.

sailed for the last time to France. After relieving his uncle Exeter at Chartres he drove the Dauphin across the Loire and then established himself in Paris. There in December 1421 he received news of the birth of his son, afterwards Henry VI; and in the following May the Queen came out with her child to join him.

But the strain of these arduous campaigns had been too much for a constitution naturally weak, and Henry now fell ill with dysentery. At first he made little of it, but his weakness soon became so great that in July, on his way to Senlis, he had to use a horse litter. In August 1422 he gave up the command of the army to Bedford and was taken to Vincennes. There in a short time it became clear that he would die. He sent for his brothers and his friends and charged them to protect his son, not to give up the French prisoners, and to let the Duke of Burgundy be Regent if he wished it. On hearing that he had only two hours to live he made his confessor recite the seven psalms; "and when they came to the word Hierusalem he said it had always been his wish after putting France in order to conquer that city."\* On August 31st 1422 he died "widely and sincerely lamented by all manners of people." His funeral was conducted with unexampled magnificence, his body being carried to Rouen and Calais on a car of crimson and gold preceded by five hundred knights in black armour and followed by the Queen and the King of Scots. On his tomb at Westminster was placed an effigy of gilt with a silver head, which was stolen during the Reformation. He was aged thirty-five and had been King for nine years, the shortest reign since the Conquest. Queen Katherine subsequently married a Welsh gentleman, Owen Tudor, by whom she became ancestress of the house of that name. She died in 1437.

Henry V was a man of striking appearance "his eyes mild as a dove's in peace, brilliant as a lion's in anger." There are portraits of him at Windsor, Eton and Oxford. He delighted in field sports, and in France was never without his hounds. For music he had an equal love, and

\* Monstrelet, i. 325.

he was a careful scholar with a practical knowledge of Latin and French; the latter was already an unusual attainment in England—during the French negotiations he writes that “his envoys did not understand that language.”\* In religion he was reverent and orthodox, his letters and speeches breathing a distinct note of piety. He was also continent and modest, while his patience and prudence were almost unrivalled. The tales of his early vagaries are now regarded as untrue, for when he was said to be a mohawk in London he was in fact ruling or fighting in Wales: nor is it likely that he was unfilial, though when his father had become a confirmed and comatose invalid he may have pressed him to make over the administration of the kingdom, a suggestion in which he was supported by the leading men in the realm.† As a soldier Henry had nearly all the virtues. He was brave, cheerful, provident, careful of his men, a brilliant tactician and a good strategist. As a ruler he was just, a protector of the poor, a supervisor of his ministers: petitions were often noted by his own hand “see that the poor partye have right.”

With all these natural advantages Henry was also fortunate, for his brothers and uncles were loyal and capable lieutenants, his cousin was Speaker of the Commons, his bishops and barons approved his policy, while his people admired him and his success. He did it is true resume a war which had little justification, “but judged by the standard of his time he cannot be condemned for it. He believed in his own cause, he devoted himself to his work and he accomplished it.”‡ In his campaigns he was often cruel—as the Conqueror or Cromwell were cruel—but he had to win battles. To heretics he was harsh; the Lollards were often traitors, and with a new dynasty and a foreign war he could not risk treason. He was always conscious of the doubtful means by which his father had obtained the crown; to expiate it he founded several religious houses.

\* Lingard, iii. 515, note.

† Stubbs, iii. 73, note.

‡ *Ibid.*, iii. 79.

The French called Henry V "*le plus vertueux et prudent de tous les princes Chrestiens regnans en son temps.*" \* Magnanimous and moderate, a general, a statesman and a man of business, the restorer of the English navy, he was a fine type of the mediæval hero, a leader worthy of England and without doubt her most popular King. The words that Shakespeare puts into his mouth at Agincourt exemplify his character and the ideals he inspired and pursued.

I am not covetous for gold,  
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;  
But if it be a sin to covet honour,  
I am the most offending soul alive.

\* Stubbs, iii. 80

## HENRY VI

1421-1471

HENRY VI was born at Windsor on December 6th 1421, the only child of Henry V and Katherine of France. His godfathers were his uncle John, Duke of Bedford, and his great-uncle Henry, Bishop of Winchester, afterwards Cardinal Beaufort. In the following spring he was taken by his mother to Paris, and there on August 31st 1422 his father died and he succeeded as King of England. Two months later the death of his grandfather Charles VI of France made him, under the recent treaty of Troyes, *King of that country also*. The dream of the Plantagenets had thus at last come true.

During Henry's minority Bedford had been appointed Protector of England and Regent of France, but while he was abroad his brother Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, was to act for him at home. In England however the most influential man was really Beaufort.

The infant King remained in the charge of his mother, "several young lords" being his playmates. When he was three years old he was brought to open Parliament where he "schrieked and cryed and sprang; and he was then led upon his feet to the choir of St. Paul's by the Lord Protector and the Duke of Exeter, and afterwards set upon a fair courser and conveyed through Chepe."\* In 1426 he was knighted by his uncle Bedford; and two years later Richard Beauchamp Earl of Warwick was appointed his governor. Warwick's duties were "to be about the King's person, to do his devoir with diligence, to exhort, stir and learn him to love God, to teach him nurture, literature and language and other manner of learning

\* Stubbs, iii. 107, note.



HENRY VI

From his picture at Eton College By kind permission of the Provost of Eton





and to chastise him when he doth amiss." \* Henry's chief amusements at this time were organs and acrobats, though he already shewed interest in his books. His mother Queen Katherine had recently married Owen Tudor, a Welsh squire of her household, but as the alliance was considered beneath her dignity she lost much of her influence and saw less of her son.

On November 6th 1429 Henry was crowned at Westminster "where he beheld the people sadly and wisely with humility and devotion." In the following year he crossed to Calais and rode to Rouen where he stayed twelve months, being present at the trial of Joan of Arc. On December 16th 1431 he was crowned at Nôtre Dame in Paris, Cardinal Beaufort paying the expenses; and he then returned to England.

There Gloucester and Beaufort were still struggling for power, for Bedford was away in France striving to retain his brother's conquests. The Cardinal was a statesman, wise, loyal and rich; while Gloucester though accomplished, was factious, unstable and licentious. But his position enabled him to raise difficulties and to hamper Beaufort. Their disputes brought Henry into public business long before he had sufficient knowledge or judgment: he was "stirred from his learning and spoken to of divers matters not behoveful." † At the age of twelve he composed a quarrel between his uncles; and when Warwick and the Cardinal deprecated his interference, Gloucester encouraged him to assert himself.

In France matters were going ill for the English. Attempts had been made to arrange a peace, Normandy and Guienne being offered if Henry would give up the French crown. But the negotiations failed; Bedford died, and the Duke of Burgundy, the most powerful of the French nobles, left the English side. The Duke of York was then made Regent of France. He was a second cousin of Henry's, a great-grandson of Edward III, and the nearest heir after Gloucester to the crown. As a

\* Orders of the Privy Council, in. 295, and Stubbs, iii. 116.

† D. N. B., ix. 508.

general York did well enough, but he had to rule a hostile country, he was kept short of money and men, and he was hampered by the political quarrels at home.

In 1436 the French recovered Paris, while the English began to lose Normandy; Warwick then went out to France to replace York. Next year Queen Katherine died leaving her two younger sons, Edmund and Jasper Tudor to the protection of their half-brother the King. Henry was thus released from tutelage and he now began to interest himself directly in the government, presiding at the Council and making appointments, often against its advice. He favoured the policy of Beaufort, who wished for an accommodation with France, and disliked the war party led by Gloucester and York.

Henry was growing up tall and slender, not unlike his father in the face. He was precocious and nervous, not strong, and his tendencies were all peaceable. Pious and charitable, with a real love for learning, he was still a youth when he planned the foundation of Eton and King's College, Cambridge; and he personally supervised their building and economy in a way which showed that in such matters at any rate he could be a capable organiser. His inclinations in foreign affairs strengthened the Cardinal's hands. Ever since his accession an exhausting and expensive war had gone on, and both in France and England there was a strong desire to end it. At last in 1443 a definite move was made. Suffolk, a grandson of Richard II's favourite, was entrusted with the negotiations, for he knew France and its people well. Meanwhile the Cardinal, equally averse to Gloucester or York as a possible heir, was striving to get Henry married; and after various suggestions a bride was found. This was Margaret of Anjou, a girl of sixteen, daughter to René, titular King of Sicily, Duke of Lorraine and Count of Provence, a prince richer in titles than in lands.\* Suffolk escorted the penniless bride to England; and in May 1444 she was married to Henry at Winchester. In

\* He was claimant to three crowns, spent much of his time in prison or in debt, and was known as *le Roi des trouvères*.

the same month a truce with France was signed. For both events Suffolk got the credit. He was Beaufort's pupil and supporter and he now stepped into his place; for the Cardinal was ageing, and Gloucester was quite out of favour with the King.

In the following summer French envoys came over to England to conclude a definite treaty. They were received at Westminster by Henry "*vestu d'une riche robe longue jusques a terre, de drap d'or vermeil. Il descendit et se tint tout droit devant sa chaire, et là attendit les ambassadeurs, et toucha tous bien humblement en ostant son chaperon ung peu.*"\* They spoke in French "since the King understood it so well. When the peace was mentioned Henry pressed the Chancellor's hand and said in English, 'I am very much rejoiced that some who are present should hear these words; they are not at their ease,' and he looked at the Duke of Gloucester who stood by. He then came to the ambassadors and raising his hat said two or three times '*Saint Jehan grant mercis,*' and taking each of them by the hand he gave very many tokens of joy." On the next day after dinner they were taken to his privy chamber "where they found him standing upright against a cupboard. It was very dark there: the King was dressed in a robe of black velvet down to the ground." After some formal remarks Henry called them to him and they talked together familiarly. "When his uncle Charles VII was referred to he raised his hat a little and said '*Saint Jehan grant mercis.*'" But nothing more permanent than a truce was agreed on, and there was general disappointment. Yet Suffolk's power grew; for Henry regarded Gloucester as the chief obstacle to peace, the young Queen hated him for opposing her marriage, while the Cardinal had long determined on his downfall.

In February 1447 a Parliament was held at Bury St. Edmunds, a place where Suffolk's influence was strong. Henry arrived there with a large escort and suddenly arrested his uncle. Ten days later Gloucester was dead,

\* Letters and Papers of Henry VI, i. 103.

perhaps naturally, for he was in bad health, but rumour said by foul play. Within a few weeks the old Cardinal also died; and Suffolk, now a duke, became supreme. Somerset, a Beaufort cousin of Henry's, replaced York who had again been in France, and the latter was transferred to the comparative exile of Ireland. This was an unfortunate move, for Gloucester's death had made York heir presumptive to the throne, and his support was of the first importance to Henry.

Within two years Somerset lost nearly all Normandy, and a distrust of Suffolk's policy began. It was fostered by York and the war party, who accused him of Gloucester's death. Suffolk had always been a lover of the French; the peace and the King's marriage were largely his work, and he was soon to suffer for them. In 1450 he was impeached and committed to the Tower. Henry and the Queen strove to save him; but public feeling was too strong, and the best they could do was to send him abroad. On leaving England however he was seized in the Channel by a privateer and murdered out of hand. He had been a capable and devoted minister, and his death was a serious blow to his master.

A rebellion now broke out in Kent under Jack Cade, the insurgents complaining that they were not represented in Parliament and that the government was bad. Henry with a considerable force met them at Blackheath, and at first they retired: but the royal troops broke up, and the rebels then murdered Lord Saye, the Treasurer. Henry went to Kenilworth while the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Winchester restored order. He then made a progress through the southern counties and inflicted severe sentences on the delinquents.

York soon returned from Ireland and Somerset from France: the one was received as the saviour of his country the other as a beaten general. But Henry made Somerset head of the government and ostracised York and his friends. Quarrels began between their partisans, who adopted white and red roses as their badges. The court was unpopular; its finances were so low that the royal

household was often short of food ; the ministers had little control, and the nation was oppressed by a sense of defeat. The struggle between York and Somerset increased. For a time York got the upper hand, and Somerset was sent to the Tower ; but he was soon reinstated, while York marched an armed force about the country which gradually sank into anarchy.

In July 1453 Lord Shrewsbury, the last hope of the English, was killed in France. Shortly afterwards Henry, while staying at Clarendon, was struck by paralysis and became for the time imbecile. "By a sudden and terrible fear he fell into such infirmity that he had neither natural feeling, nor sense of reason nor understanding, nor could any physician or medecine cure him." \* Three months later the Queen gave birth to a son—she had been married nine years without having a child—and York at once ceased to be heir to the throne. Henry was hidden away at Windsor, incapable of governing and ignorant of all that took place. But the losses in France had so seriously damaged Somerset's position that York was able to improve his own. Early in 1454 a Parliament of his partisans chose him as Protector, and he then put Somerset in custody and reorganised the ministry. So for nearly a year matters continued, Henry remaining absolutely silent, unmoved at visits of the Council, unable to reply to their questions : "They could have no answer, word nor sign : and therefore went their ways. The King was led away to his chamber silent between two men." At last in December he showed signs of returning consciousness, sending his Christmas gifts to St. Edward's shrine and enquiring after his two colleges. "On Monday afternoon the Queen came to see him and brought my Lord Prynce with her. And then he asked what the Prince's name was, and the Queen told him Edward ; and then he held up his hands and thanked God therefor. And then he said he never knew til that tyme nor wist not what was said to him, nor wist not where he had be whils he hath be seke til now. And my Lord of Wynches-

\* *Incerti Scriptoris Chronicon*, 44.

ter was with him on the morrow after Tweltheday and he spake as well as ever he did. And he saith he is in charitee with all the world, and so he wold all the lords were. And now he seith matyns of Our Lady and evensong and herth his mass devoutly." \*

Throughout Henry's illness the Queen had tended him with devotion, but her son now claimed her care. Henceforward her energy was centred on preserving his rights and combating the attacks of York. She had little money and few friends, but she was tenacious and intrepid and she ruled her husband.

Henry's recovery restored the old system, Somerset being replaced at the head of affairs, while York was deprived of his post as Protector and dismissed from the Council. This final insult resolved him to resort to force; and with his powerful Neville cousins, Salisbury and Warwick, he collected his followers and moved on London. Henry and Somerset met him with the royal troops, and at the battle of St. Albans in May 1455 Somerset was killed, and Henry, after being wounded by an arrow in the neck, was taken prisoner. He had been left almost alone near the royal banner and had walked into a tanner's shop where the Duke of York found him. He was treated with respect and escorted to London, but the shock was too much for his mind and he again lost his reason. For some months the government was administered by York, until the Queen gradually resumed control; and on Henry's recovery York was once more displaced. He continued however to be the first figure in the country, for his association with the Nevilles made him strong in the north and west, while the southern towns already supported his cause. The Queen, an active manager, kept up a constant correspondence with France which loaded her with suspicion and increased the doubts on her virtue.

In 1458 a temporary accord was come to between Henry and his cousin, and they went in procession to St. Paul's, York leading the Queen. But a year later hostilities were renewed. Henry, spurred on by his wife, attacked

\* Paston Letters, iii. 14.

and dispersed his enemies at Ludlow. York was forced to fly to Ireland; while his son Edward, Earl of March, with the two Nevilles, took refuge in Calais. Henry then called a Parliament at Coventry, where all the leading Yorkists were attainted.

In June 1460 Salisbury, Warwick and March returned to England with the troops of the Calais garrison. They were admitted to London and on July 10th at Northampton they met and defeated Henry, who on this occasion was made prisoner in his tent. The Queen with the young prince fled to Scotland, while Henry was brought back to Westminster. But though Salisbury and Warwick still treated him with deference, York now took up a truculent attitude "breaking open the doors of the King's chamber and making him occupy the Queen's apartments." He even tried to usurp the throne, but here the lords gave him no encouragement, and the powerful Warwick definitely withstood him. Eventually it was decided that Henry should reign for life, and that York should then succeed to the crown to the exclusion of the Prince of Wales, a compromise which pleased no one.

Henry remained in London a nominal King, but the Queen soon assembled another army and in December 1460 she defeated the Yorkists at Wakefield. York and Salisbury were killed, and she then marched south to release her husband. At the second battle of St. Albans the Lancastrians were again victorious, and Henry was recaptured by his wife. But while the King and Queen delayed outside London, Edward of March, now Duke of York by his father's death, arrived with Warwick at Westminster, and on March 5th 1461 he proclaimed himself King as Edward IV. Henry and Margaret had retreated north; Edward pursued them, and at Towton three weeks later the Lancastrian army was shattered. Henry fled to Scotland, and for the next few years his movements are obscure. His cousins the Dukes of Somerset and Exeter accompanied him across the border where he bought the help of the Scots by surrendering Berwick; and for a time he remained in Edinburgh, at Linlithgow



Palace and the Black Friars' Abbey. His affairs were managed by Queen Margaret whose courage and resource were indefatigable. Sailing from Kircudbright to Brittany she visited the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy, and in 1462 she returned to Scotland with a few foreign troops. She was joined by the remaining Lancastrians and she attacked Newcastle and Carlisle; but the approach of Edward and Warwick drove her back and she had to fly to Flanders. Two years later Henry with a force of Scots and exiles made another raid into Northumberland, but at Hexham he was defeated and so closely pursued that his baggage was taken, including "his bycoket or cap of state embrodered with two crowns of gold and ornamented with pearls." \* For some months he lurked in the Lancashire hills protected by the loyalty of his adherents; but one day while dining in disguise at Waddington Hall he was recognised by an Abingdon monk, and soon afterwards he was captured in Clitheroe Wood, his only companions being a priest, a doctor and a servant. In June 1465 he was brought up to London. Warwick met him at Islington, tied his legs to his stirrups,† and in this guise led him through Cheapside and Cornhill to the Tower.

Edward of York was now firmly established as King; and for five years Henry remained in custody, treated with little respect or humanity. He was depressed and half imbecile but still devoted to his religious exercises. Occasionally he showed some signs of his former state. When asked why he had held the crown of England unjustly he would answer "My father and grandfather were Kings of England, and I wore the crown forty years, and all my lords did me homage and plighted me their faith."‡ Attempts were made to starve and even to kill him: "he was dirty, sickly, ill-dressed and neglected;" but he bore all his troubles with patience, his strongest protest being "Forsothe and forsothe ye do foully to smyte a kynge anyoynted so." §

\* Lungard, iv 151.

† Blakman, 44.

† W. Worcester, 785.

§ *Ibid.*, 40.

Henry only survived these dismal years because while his son lived it was to Edward's interest to keep him alive. But in October 1470 the scene suddenly changed. Warwick, 'the Kingmaker' as he was now called, fell out with Edward and made an alliance first with Clarence, Edward's brother, and then with Queen Margaret. Helped by Louis XI of France Warwick and Clarence came over to England, defeated Edward and forced him in his turn to fly to Flanders. They then restored Henry to the throne. Two bishops came to him at the Tower where they found him "not so clenely kept as schuld seme suche a Prynce." They released him with reverence, dressed him in a long blue velvet gown and took him back to the palace at Westminster. He was almost senile "a shadow, like a sack of wool, as mute as a crowned calf." But gradually he recovered some of his wits and for six months he again wore the crown, a puppet in the hands of Warwick. At Christmas he sent messages to his boys at Eton, and he met and blessed his young nephew, Henry of Richmond, the future Henry VII.

But this interlude was short. In March 1471 Edward landed in Yorkshire with some Burgundians, and marching on London was at once received as King. Henry greeted him at the bishop's palace saying "Cousin you are welcome, my life will be safe in your hands."\* On Easter Day Edward defeated Warwick at Barnet, taking Henry in his train. His victory was complete: Warwick was killed, and Henry was then sent back to the Tower. A few weeks later Queen Margaret landed in Dorset with French troops, but she was defeated by Edward at Tewkesbury where her son, the Prince of Wales, was slain. Edward then returned to London; and on May 21st 1471, Henry was murdered in the Tower, almost certainly by the orders, perhaps by the hand, of Edward's brother Richard of Gloucester.† "It was said that he had died disconsolate and of pure melancholy" but recent exami-

\* D N.B., ix. 517.

† Probably in the Wakefield Tower, in the room where the Crown Jewels are now shewn.

nations of his remains prove conclusively that he was killed. His body was exposed in St. Paul's "where it bled," and was then taken by river and by night to Chertsey where it was buried. it was afterwards transferred to Windsor. Henry was not quite fifty at the time of his death: he had been King for about forty years; he left no issue, and with him finished the male line of the Lancastrians. For four years his widow remained a prisoner at Windsor: she was then allowed to return to her home in Provence.

Henry's two grandfathers, Henry IV of England and Charles VI of France, had suffered from bodily and mental disease, and he undoubtedly inherited their taint. As a boy he was weakly and overstrung, and his premature entry into affairs when he should have been living the life of a child affected the balance of his mind. An assiduous student, always reading histories, legends or homilies, devoted to music and prayer, he had little aptitude for sport or outdoor exercise, though he used occasionally to hunt. The education of the young and the services of the Church were his real delight, and in these his interest never waned. Warfare and bloodshed he loathed, but he lived so simple a life that when it was necessary he bore privations easily, and he could sleep on the ground in a campaign or suffer the rigours of imprisonment without complaint. But though temperate and restrained in his personal habits he had no ideas of public economy or of the management of money. He was so vague and generous that he gave away offices without thought and let his heart rule his head. Brought up to depend on strong characters—Bedford, Beaufort, Suffolk, Somerset and Queen Margaret—he was only too ready to leave business to them, while he solaced himself with the pacific pleasures which composed his daily round. The murders of Gloucester and Suffolk, the revolts of Cade and York, an empty treasury and a distracted kingdom unsettled his mind and brought on mental prostration. He became the puppet of his wife, and was dragged from battle to battle and from Parliament to Parliament when

he only longed for the quiet of the cloister. Always striving to keep the peace he continually found himself immersed in faction or war, fighting for he knew not what, until the Tower at last gave him the safety he desired. Nearly all his days were passed in political struggles, and his closest friend was the most violent partisan of all: "There was no princess in Christendom more accomplished than Margaret of Anjou: she felt and roused bitter hatred:" York called her "a scolding woman," while Edward IV said he feared her even when a fugitive more than all the Lancastrian princes.\*

There is an interesting contemporary account of Henry's character by Blacman, an Eton Fellow and possibly his spiritual director. "The King" he says "was a man simple and upright, without any crook or craft of untruth. With none did he deal craftily nor ever would say an untrue word to any. With sedulous devotion he was a diligent worshipper of God, more given to prayer or the reading of scriptures or chronicles than to temporal things or vain sports. These he despised as trifling. To every sort and condition of man he was a diligent exhorter and adviser. In church he was never pleased to sit upon a seat or to walk to and fro, but always with bared head *kneeled before his book. When riding on a journey* he would let his royal cap drop to the ground, and he preferred the Holy Cross to be set in his crown rather than flowers. He would never suffer hawks, swords or daggers to be brought into church, or conferences to be carried on there. He was chaste and pure from the beginning of his days, in word and deed. With the Queen he kept his marriage vow sincerely, even in the absences of that lady which were sometimes very long, and he made a covenant with his eyes never to look unchastely upon any woman. It happened once at Christmas time that a certain great lord brought before him a dance or show of young ladies with bared bosoms who were to dance in that guise before the King. But he very angrily averted his eyes and went out to his chamber saying, 'Fy, fy for

\* Strickland, n. 244, 247.

shame, forsothe ye be to blame.' At another time riding by Bath where are warm baths, the King saw in them men wholly naked with every garment cast off; at which he was displeased and went away quickly. He took great precautions to secure not only his own chastity but also that of his servants. For he kept careful watch through hidden windows of his chamber lest any woman should cause the fall of any of his household.

Against avarice he was wary and alert but he was liberal to the poor, contenting himself with what he had. In conferring benefices he was most discreet and from simony he was always free. Of priests he said 'I would rather have them somewhat weak in music than defective in the scriptures.' When he met any Eton boys at Windsor he would advise them and would give them money saying 'Be good boys, gentle and teachable and servants of the Lord.'

"He was not ashamed to be a server at mass, and at table he would devoutly give thanks standing. He made a rule that a certain dish representing the five wounds of Christ, as it were red with blood, should be set before any other course. From his youth up he always wore round toed shoes and boots like a farmer, a rolled gown with a hood like a townsman, a full coat with footgear wholly black, and on his bare body a rough hair shirt. He used but very brief speech but passed his days with his Council or in reading. Once when I was alone with him in his chamber employed upon holy books, there came a knock at the door from a certain mighty duke, and the King said 'They do so interrupt me that I can hardly snatch a moment.' He would never use any other oath than 'Forsothe and forsothe' and a swearer was his abomination. In his troubles he said 'For this kingdom which is transitory I do not greatly care. Our kinsman of March thrusts himself into it as is his pleasure.' " \*

Such a prince as this was hardly fitted to the electric atmosphere of the fifteenth century. To his subjects he was a holy but hapless saint, to his nobles a pawn

\* Blacman, 25-44.

to be played or taken at pleasure, in Warwick's words, "stupid, one who does not rule but is ruled." He had indeed but a luckless heritage. The representative of a doubtful line, governed by jealous uncles, the ruler of two exhausted lands, he lost all his father's gains; and after thirty years of poverty and defeat those who remembered Agincourt saw nothing left but Calais, with shame abroad and civil war at home. Greedy lords and active rivals did not scruple to oust from his throne one who spent his days with priests and clerks, who left the conduct of his kingdom to unpopular ministers and who was led by a foreign wife. Yet weak and witless as he was Henry knew how to make his name endure: his two foundations, by their strength and permanence, attest his ultimate wisdom.

Mild, honest and devout, he had to deal with men who neither possessed nor valued such qualities. His thoughts were too simple, his faith too sincere for his age, and he died as he had lived, a quiet, sober scholar, amazed and repelled by the bloody clash of treachery, intrigue, assassination and civil war.

## EDWARD IV

1442-1483

EDWARD IV, first styled Earl of March and later Duke of York, was born at Rouen on April 28th 1442, the second surviving son of Richard, Duke of York by Lady Cecily Neville, daughter of Ralph, Earl of Westmoreland. His father was the son of Richard, Earl of Cambridge by Lady Anne Mortimer, daughter of Roger, Earl of March who through his mother was heir of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, second son of King Edward III; while the Earl of Cambridge was son and eventual heir of Edmund Duke of York, King Edward's fifth son. Through the female line therefore Richard of York was senior in blood to the three Henrys who were only descendants of Edward's fourth son; and the successive deaths without issue of Henry IV's younger sons, the Dukes of Bedford, Clarence and Gloucester, left him next heir to Henry VI if the Beaufort family was passed over. The Beauforts had a less substantial claim than his own. They were descended from the Duke of Lancaster by his marriage with Katherine Swynford; but they were born before wedlock, and though legitimatised they were, it was said, excluded from the succession.\* In 1447 therefore on the Duke of Gloucester's death Richard of York became heir presumptive to the throne.

Besides his Yorkist honours Richard had inherited the lands of the Mortimers, the principal barons of the west; while his marriage with Lord Westmoreland's daughter

\* The Act of Parliament 21 Ric. II mentioned no such exclusion, but in the time of Henry IV an interlineation, made it was said by the King himself, had barred their right to the crown.



#### EDWARD IV

From a picture in the National Portrait Gallery. By kind permission of the Duke of Northumberland





had still further enhanced his position. The Nevilles were the magnates of the north; Lady Westmoreland was a daughter of John of Gaunt; one of her sons was Earl of Salisbury in right of his wife, a Montacute; while Salisbury's son, Richard, Earl of Warwick had acquired by his marriage the immense estates of the Beauchamps and the Despencers. Warwick was fourteen years older than his cousin, Edward of March, and six years junior to Henry VI who was second cousin to them both.

At the time of Edward's birth his father had been for over a year Regent for Henry VI in France, his second term of office there. During that time his wife 'the Rose of Raby' lived at Rouen, and in later years, when Edward claimed the English crown, Louis XI and the Duke of Burgundy used to speak of him as "*le fils de l'archier*" in allusion to the duchess's supposed amours with a bowman of her guard. As a child Edward remained with his mother, but in 1447 his father was recalled and sent as Lord Deputy to Ireland; and Edward, who by the death of his elder brother was now his father's heir, was then brought to England. In 1453 Henry VI became insane, and the Queen bore a son, Edward, Prince of Wales. This greatly altered York's prospects. For some time he had been discontented with the government, but he now began openly to oppose it, coming constantly over to England and stirring up sedition.

At this time Edward and his younger brother Edmund, Earl of Rutland, were living at Ludlow. Some of their letters to their father remain. In June 1454 they write "in as lowely wyse as any sonnes can or may" saying that they are in "good helith of bodis, have attended oure lernyng and would like the grome of your kechyn whose service is to us ryght agreeable":\* and "on Seturs-day in the Astur Woke" they thank the duke "for grene gownes nowe late sende to our grete comforte," ask "for breviaries and summe fyne bonetts" and "complain of the "odieux reule and demenyng of Richard Crofte and his brother."†

\* Paston Letters, i. 148.

† Ellis, i. 1, 9

During the early part of the Wars of the Roses the two boys spent their days on the Welsh border, following the fortunes of their father and the exploits of their cousin Warwick. But in October 1459 the duke was deserted by his men at the battle of Ludlow and he then fled with Edmund to Ireland; while Edward, with Salisbury and Warwick, escaped to Calais, Warwick himself steering the fishing boat in which they sailed. In Calais the three earls established themselves, in definite rebellion to King Henry, by whom they were speedily attainted. There they maintained an excellent service of information and kept in touch with York in Ireland. They took prisoner Lord Rivers who had been sent against them; and "my lord of Warwick rated him and my lord of March rated him likewise." Four years later Edward was to marry Rivers' daughter and was to fight the Nevilles.

For eight months Edward remained at Calais with his uncle and cousin. He was nearing manhood, and his character was being formed in a crafty and merciless school. Warwick's fame was already at its height. He was the richest man in England, the idol of London and a deft and dashing leader in war. From him the young prince learnt those lessons of diplomacy, tactics and intrigue which were to guide him in the future. Edward himself was highly gifted. He was singularly handsome, six feet tall, graceful and courteous, an adept at fighting and gallantry, the antithesis of his pious cousin the King.

By June 1460 Salisbury and Warwick, who had been scouring the Channel and showing Edward some sea warfare, had concerted their plans with his father. They crossed to Sandwich and were joined by Bouchier, Archbishop of Canterbury, and George Neville, Bishop of Exeter. With 20,000 men they marched on London where the wealthy Warwick was warmly welcomed. On July 10th they defeated Henry at Northampton and brought him back to the capital. In the battle many leading Lancastrians were killed, for it was Warwick's policy, as it became Edward's, to "slay the lords and spare

the commons," a useful method of securing plunder, popularity and prestige.

In October York arrived from Ireland and at once tried to seize the throne for himself; but this neither Parliament nor Warwick would permit; so a compromise was come to by which Henry was to reign for life and York was to succeed him, to the exclusion of the young Prince of Wales. York and Edward swore not to molest the King further, and the peace was ratified at St. Paul's. The government however was transferred to the Yorkists, George Neville becoming Chancellor, Salisbury Warden of the northern counties, and Warwick Captain of Calais.

During the autumn Queen Margaret had raised a fresh army in Wales and the north; and in December, when York and Salisbury marched against her, they were defeated and killed, their heads being set up on the walls of York, the duke's in a paper crown: the young Edmund was murdered after the battle. To retrieve this catastrophe Warwick, who had remained in London, moved cautiously north, taking King Henry with him; while Edward, now Duke of York, went off to raise more troops. In February 1461 the Queen won another victory at St. Albans and released Henry. Warwick then fled to the west. He was met by Edward who had just beaten a mixed array of Bretons and Welshmen under Jasper Tudor, Henry's half-brother; and the two cousins marched back to London and fortified themselves in Baynard's Castle which was the Yorkist stronghold.

Henry and Margaret were outside the city trying to restrain their men from pillage, but they now retired north and Edward seized his opportunity. While Warwick's troops overawed the citizens and his brother the bishop harangued them, a Council was called in Westminster Hall where Edward openly claimed the crown. He was supported by the Yorkist lords and accepted by the people; and on March 5th 1461 he was proclaimed King as Edward IV. Though only eighteen he had already given proofs of military ability, he bore a famous name and he had formidable connections. But

Warwick was his main asset, for he was by far the most powerful and popular peer in the realm, his party looked to him as their chief, and he intended to rule England himself.

With his train of artillery, the only one in the country, Warwick now marched against Henry, while Edward followed. On May 29th the Lancastrians were heavily defeated at Towton, the Yorkists losing 10,000 men and their opponents twice that number. Henry and Margaret fled to Scotland, and for the time their cause was lost. Edward then returned to London where he was crowned on June 28th. He made his two brothers, George and Richard, Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester, while upon Warwick and his relations he showered offices and titles. The earl himself remained in the north, reducing the rebels, watching the border and biding his time. In November a Parliament was held, and by a comprehensive bill of attainder most of the Lancastrians' possessions were transferred to Edward and his friends. On December 21st he dissolved the Houses with a speech from the throne thanking them "for their true hearts and tender consideration, promising that his body should always be ready for their defence and that he would be unto them a very rightwise and loving liege lord." \*

To confirm Edward's position there was still much to be done, and for three years he and Warwick moved about the country fighting Margaret and the Scots. Edward however also found time to amuse himself, and in London he led so licentious a life that his health soon prevented him from soldiering. Warwick, who despised such vices, was thus left to finish the war alone. In 1465 King Henry was captured and confined in the Tower of London, and Margaret then fled to Flanders.

Peace being now established Warwick determined to find Edward a wife. His own two daughters were the richest heiresses in England, but policy suggested an alliance abroad. After a Spanish and a Scots princess had been successively considered he eventually decided on a sister of the French Queen's, and he proposed to

\* Lingard, iv. 145.

go as ambassador to complete the business. But at Michaelmas 1464 Edward suddenly announced that five months previously he had married Dame Elizabeth Grey. This lady was a daughter of Sir Richard Woodville, created Earl Rivers, by Jacqueline of Luxembourg, Duchess of Bedford. Woodville, 'a country squire but the handsomest man in England,' had managed to make a great marriage; his daughter Elizabeth had been appointed maid of honour to the Queen, and she had then married Sir John Grey, a Lancastrian, who was killed at St. Albans. After her husband's death she had retired with her two sons to her mother's house at Grafton, and there Edward met her. She was clever and good looking but she was five years older than Edward, and neither by blood nor fortune could she be held a suitable match. She begged him to restore her children's inheritance, and Edward attracted by her appearance wanted more than she would give. She told him that "she knew herself to be unworthy to be a Queen but valued her honour more than to be a concubine";\* so Edward "being a lusty prince who attempted the stability and modesty of divers ladies and gentlewomen, when he could not perceive none of such womanhood, wisdom and beauty, he then with a little company came unto the manor of Grafton and after resisting at divers times, seeing the constant mind of the said Dame Elizabeth early in a morning he wedded her."† "The ceremony was performed by a priest in the presence only of his clerk, the Duchess of Bedford and two female attendants, and the King and Elizabeth never met in private till the whole family had retired to rest."‡

This clandestine alliance and its concealment angered Warwick terribly, for it shattered his political plans and made him ridiculous in the eyes of Europe. But for the moment he bowed to Edward's will, and with the Duke of Clarence he publicly presented Elizabeth to the lords at

\* Habington, 437.

† Chronicle of the White Rose, Hearne's Fragment, 16.

‡ Lingard, iv. 155.

Reading, a sop being given him by the translation of his brother George to the archbishopric of York. It is possible that this marriage was not so ill-considered as it was painted and that it was as much due to Edward's craft as to his concupiscence. He was tiring of tutelage, he saw the value of a Lancastrian connection, and it may be that he hoped to make the Woodvilles a counterpoise to the Nevilles. At any rate he developed that policy. Within little more than a year the new Queen's five sisters were married to the Duke of Buckingham and the eldest sons of the Earls of Arundel, Essex, Kent and Pembroke; her brother, aged twenty, wedded the wealthy Duchess of Norfolk, who was eighty; her son was betrothed to the Duke of Exeter's heiress, whom Warwick had intended for his own nephew; while her father was made an earl, a Knight of the Garter and Treasurer. Nor was this all. Warwick's foreign policy had always been to ally with France against Burgundy, and in 1467 he went on an embassy to Paris for this purpose: but on his return he found that an arrangement had been made behind his back to marry Edward's sister Margaret to the Duke of Burgundy, a plan which would definitely alienate the French. During his absence his brother the archbishop had also been deprived of the great seal.

To indignities such as these Warwick would not submit, and he prepared to resist. His first move was to offer Clarence the hand of his elder daughter Isabel. Clarence, who was ambitious, readily agreed; but Edward forbade the marriage and enrolled "two hundred strong varlets of the best archers in England to be about his person." \* Warwick however had plenty of resource. In June 1469 the Nevilles fomented a rising in Yorkshire; and when Edward went to quell it Clarence slipped across to Calais, where Warwick was in command, and married Isabel. Edward wrote ordering Warwick to join him; "We do not believe that ye be of any such disposition towards us as the rumour here runnyth, considering the trust and affection we bare you." † But disaffection

\* W. Worcester, 788.

† Lingard, iv. 66.

seemed to grow everywhere; the King's troops were constantly defeated; and at Coventry Edward himself was "rescued" by Archbishop Neville who brought him practically a prisoner to Middleham, Warwick's principal stronghold. Meanwhile Rivers and one of his sons had been captured and executed by the rebels.

Warwick and Clarence now returned to London. The earl had promised the crown to his new son-in-law, and he seemed able to bestow it. The two rival Kings of England were both in his keeping, one in the Tower of London, the other at Middleham Castle. But he found Edward's party stronger than he had imagined, so he escorted him to London and an apparent reconciliation took place. Warwick's nephew and heir was then created Duke of Bedford and betrothed to Edward's infant daughter, while the earl himself was confirmed in all his offices and power. Yet the conspiracies still went on. When Edward was invited to Moor Park by the Archbishop of York "a little before supper, when they should have washed, John Ratcliff warned the King privily and bade him beware for there were ordained privily an hundred men of arms the which should take him and carry him out of the way. Wherefore the King, faining to make his water, caused a good horse to be saddled, and so with a small company rode to Windsor." \*

In 1470 there came a fresh outbreak in Lincolnshire. Edward marched on the rebels, defeated them at Losecoat Field and, as before, found that Warwick and Clarence were responsible. Again he summoned them to join him; but they went off to Paris where they made friends with Louis XI and the exiled Queen Margaret. At Angers, after much hesitation on Margaret's part, terms were agreed on. Her son the young Prince of Wales was to marry Warwick's second daughter Anne; their combined forces were to invade England, and Warwick was then to restore Henry to the throne. It was an ambitious bargain, its fault being that it diminished the prospects of Clarence and his trust in Warwick.

\* Chr. White Rose, 26.



In September Edward went north to help Lord Montague, Warwick's brother, in suppressing a new revolt. "He had left the Queen, great with child, in the Tower of London. But in the north country as he lay in his bed the sergeant of his minstrels came to him in haste and bade him arise for he had enemies coming to take him, the which were within six or seven miles."\* Guessing that Montague had deserted him, Edward with his brother Gloucester, his chamberlain Hastings and 800 men, rode to Lynn. There they embarked in three hired vessels for Flanders. So sudden had been his flight that Edward had neither money nor clothes, he had to pay the skipper with a marten furred gown, and he landed in Holland almost destitute. Meanwhile Warwick and Clarence had arrived in London where they were met by Archbishop Neville. They released Henry from the Tower, installed him as King at Westminster and proclaimed Edward a rebel. Queen Elizabeth took sanctuary in the Abbey and there her eldest son was born. For five months Warwick now ruled in Henry's name, recruiting his own followers and the Lancastrians, and hastening the arrival of Queen Margaret with her troops from France. In Flanders Edward was equally active: from his brother-in-law the Duke of Burgundy he borrowed troops and ships, and by secret promises he persuaded the fleeing Clarence to desert again.

In March 1471 Edward crossed from Flushing with 2,000 well-armed men and landed at Ravenspur, as Henry IV had done seventy-two years before. Giving out that he had only come to claim his duchy of York he entered that city, where he swore to be true to King Henry. But as he moved south his army increased; Clarence joined him, while Warwick let him pass and then sounded him for terms. By April 11th Edward was back in London where he was received with joy. "Three causes led to his welcome: he owed many debts there, he had many mistresses among the citizens' wives, and the Queen had just borne him a son."†

\* Chr. White Rose, 29.

† Communes, iii. 7.

Three days later with over 10,000 men he marched out to Barnet, and there, on Easter Sunday, he met the combined forces of Warwick, Montague and Oxford. At first Edward's right wing under his brother Gloucester was driven back by Oxford, but later on in the heavy mist the de Vere badge of a star was mistaken for Edward's sun. A panic began, the rebels fled, and Warwick and Montague were killed on the field. In a few weeks Queen Margaret with her French troops landed at Weymouth, but her delay had been fatal. Edward with Warwick's captured train of artillery intercepted and defeated her at Tewkesbury on May 4th. Her son, a lad of sixteen, was taken in the fight and brought before the King, who asked why he had come to England. The boy replied that he had come to recover his father's heritage; "at which words King Edward said nothing but with his hand thrust him from him, or (as some saie) struke him with his gantlet; whome incontinentlie George, Duke of Clarence, Richard, Duke of Glocester, Thomas Graie, marques Dorset and William, Lord Hastings, that stood by, suddenlie murdered."\* Queen Margaret was captured, Somerset executed, and only a remnant of the Lancastrians escaped. On May 20th Edward returned victorious to London; and on the following night King Henry died in the Tower, murdered it was said by Gloucester.† The White Rose had crushed its foes.

Edward was now his own master. The Lancastrian attainders placed one-fifth of the whole land in his possession, and he became richer than any English sovereign had ever been. By subsidies, loans, fines and private trading he increased his fortune, and for the rest of his reign he was secure. But with safety his character sank, for he devoted himself to pleasure. His easy manners pleased the people, and his amours, which comprised all classes,

\* Holinshed, iv, 320. Other accounts say that the Prince was "slayne in the fiede," but it seems certain that Edward approved his death

† Historie of the Arrival of King Edward IV, 38.

did not vex them. The birth of his son had strengthened his dynasty, his natural bent was towards autocracy, and though he followed a policy of peace he did not hesitate to threaten war in order to extract supplies from the few Parliaments he summoned.

In 1474 he took a considerable expedition to Calais, whence he sent Louis XI a challenge in form. But Louis knew his foibles. He promised Edward a pension and the hand of the Dauphin for his daughter Elizabeth; and this was what Edward desired. Philippe de Commines describes the meeting of the two Kings near Pecquigny: "*Le roy d'Angleterre vint tres bien accompagné: ce sembloit bien roy. Avec luy estoit le duc de Clarence son frere, le duc de Northumberland, son chambellan, monsieur de Hastings, son chancelier et autres; et n'y en avoit que trois ou quatre habillés de drap d'or, pareil dudit roy. Ce roy avoit une barette de velour noir sur la teste; et y avoit une grande fleur de lys de pierreries par dessus. C'estoit un très beau prince et grand, mais il commençoit a engresser: et l'avois vu autre fois plus beau; car je n'ay point souvenance d'avoir jamais vu un plus bel homme qu'il estoit quand monsieur de Waric le fit fuir d'Angleterre. Comme il approcha de la barrière il osta sa barette. Le roy (de France) luy dit "Monsieur mon cousin vous soyez le très bien venu; il n'y a homme au monde que je desirasse tant a voir que vous; et loué soit Dieu que nous sommes icy assemblés a si bonne intention."* Le roy d'Angleterre respondit a ce propos en assez bon françois . . . Apres le serment fait nostre roy commença a dire au roy d'Angleterre, en se riant, qu'il falloit qu'il vint a Paris, et qu'il le festoyeroit avec les dames; et le roy d'Angleterre le prit a grand plaisir." \* Louis however had no intention of letting Edward come to Paris, and when the matter was mentioned again he made excuses. So Edward went home with his promises and his pension. As a military venture his journey had failed, but financially it had been a success.

Firm on his throne, his family, wealth and power growing yearly, fortified by loyal ministers and well

\* Commines, iv. 10.

served by his spies, he now became a tyrant. His objects were to keep England quiet and to keep peace with France, and in both he succeeded. In 1477 his arrangements were slightly jeopardised by Clarence who had lost his wife and proposed to marry the heiress of Burgundy. Such an alliance would have estranged the French, and Edward warned his brother not to pursue it. But Clarence was deaf to reason: perhaps Gloucester poisoned Edward's mind against him; the two younger brothers had married Warwick's daughters and each coveted the other's inheritance. "A wrangle took place in the Council, a sad sight; no one argued against the Duke but the King, no one answered the King but the Duke."\* At last Edward accused his brother of treason, and against such a judge Clarence stood little chance. He was sentenced to death on the usual charge of sorcery; and to avoid scandal he was made away with in the Tower, drowned, it was said, in a cask of malmsey wine. Edward then gave his confidence to Gloucester, who was as good a soldier as a counsellor. Gloucester watched the borders, Bishop Morton managed the exchequer, while Hastings the Chamberlain looked after the household. Edward himself had become a sybarite, only concerned with women, food or money: and though the Queen resented his harem and the people his taxes he was so strong that he could ignore opposition.

In London he mixed with the rich merchants, affected cultured society, patronised printing and the arts, and preferred the newly made to the feudal nobles. Both at home and abroad his policy prospered, until in 1482 there came a blow. A Burgundian alliance was offered to Louis, and Louis at once accepted it. Edward saw himself deceived, his daughter jilted and his pension in peril. He took the disappointment badly, for his pride was upset; and in January 1483 he called a Parliament and prepared for war. But quite suddenly he fell ill, none knew why, and a few days later, on April 9th, he died, probably of fever following a surfeit. He was not quite

\* Hist. Croyland Cont., 562.

forty-one and had reigned twenty-two years. He was buried at Windsor in his own St. George's chapel.

By his wife he left seven children; Edward, Prince of Wales who succeeded him, Richard, Duke of York, Elizabeth afterwards wife of Henry VII, and four other daughters, of whom three had been promised to foreign princes though they eventually married English peers. By Elizabeth Lacy, one of his mistresses, he had two children, Arthur Plantagenet, Lord de L'isle, an ancestor of Monk, Duke of Albemarle, and Elizabeth married to Sir Thomas Lumley from whom descend the Earls of Scarbrough. His widow, after some unhappy experiences in the succeeding reigns, died at Bermondsey Abbey in 1492.

As a young man Edward IV was celebrated for his looks, his height and his figure, though in later years, when his excesses had damaged his health, he became corpulent and coarse. His education was sufficient; he could speak French, he knew something of books and pictures, and he acquired a fine taste in dress, wine and cooking. His badge of a golden sun typified his magnificence, and he kept a generous and expensive table, 2,000 persons being fed daily in his palace at Eltham. He was a good swordsman, rider and dancer, with a pleasant address, a gallant bearing and plenty of courage. "His memory was marvellous in a man so given to feasting, debauchery, lust and vanity, for he knew the names and fortunes of almost everyone all over the country."\* He also understood the value of the public eye: "he sat on his bench in Westminster Hall to see a foul rape punished, and kissed a widow for giving him twenty pounds, which was so extraordinary a favour for one declining in years that she doubled the sum."† In war he was a leader of real merit; he fought and won nine battles. As a financier he was shrewd and provident and he was the first King of England for centuries who died free from debt. Yet he was often rash and careless and always selfish. When action was necessary he could be rapid and effective, for

\* Hist. Croy. Cont., 564.

† Habington, 436, 461.

scruples of humanity never deterred him, but when the danger had passed he relapsed quickly into sloth and ease. "Never was a prince whom adversity did more harden or prosperity more soften." \*

Skelton, the poet of his day, deplores Edward's fortune and his faults :

"I stored my cofers and allso my chest  
With taksys takynge of the comenalte,  
I toke ther tresure but of ther prayers mist  
I had ynough, I held me not content."

With the people at large Edward's popularity sank as his years increased, for in business he was cold, hard and cruel. He introduced torture and espionage, he slew his nobles methodically, and he terrorised even his guards. Dispensing with Parliaments and relying on benevolences, confiscation and commerce he broke the power of the baronage and made Church and Commons alike dependent on his will. To women of whatever class he was inordinately devoted, and his relations with the wives of the London merchants undoubtedly helped him, for his amours discharged his debts. "To the ladies he applied a general courtship which made them idolators of him" † : "never man was framed by nature more apt to the exercises of love." ‡ His best-known mistress was Jane Shore, a goldsmith's wife. "She had a proper wit, could rede and write well, was mery in company, redy and quick of answer, neither mute nor ful of bable. The King's favour she never abused to any man's hurt, but to many a man's comfort and relief." It was she who saved Eton and King's College, Cambridge from Edward's rapacity. Of her and two others of his ladies he said that "one was the merriest, another the wiliest and the third the holiest harlot in his realme, whom no man could get out of Churche except it wer to his bed." §

Edward IV came of a bad stock. His grandfather had been executed for treason, his father spent his life in

\* Habington, 441.

† *Ibid.*, 436.

‡ *Ibid.*, 472.

§ *More, Richard III.*, 84-5.

rebellion, his mother's virtue was doubtful, and his brothers were famous for treachery. Educated in a school that knew no virtue but victory, immersed from childhood in faction, murder and war, he was an apt disciple of his cousin Warwick and his contemporary Louis XI. But though cruel, tyrannical and vicious, without mercy, morality or restraint, he was a careful guardian of the State and a capable and successful ruler. By birth the most English King who had reigned since the Conquest, for none of his progenitors to the third degree were foreign, he was in policy a pure exponent of despotism and in character a typical Italian of the Renaissance.

In a man's lifetime, from 1400 to 1485, four Kings of England, twelve princes of the blood and twelve near relatives or connections of the King fell by battle, murder or sudden death. At the centre of this holocaust stood Edward IV, the inheritor and chief exponent of a system of Tarquinian tactics. At first his policy prospered, but soon after his death it returned like a boomerang and it then rapidly annihilated his race.







## EDWARD V

From a panel in St George's Chapel, Windsor By kind  
 permission of the Dean of Windsor

## EDWARD V

1470-1483

EDWARD V was born in the abbot's house at Westminster on November 2nd 1470, the eldest son of Edward IV by Elizabeth Woodville. At the time of his birth his father had been compelled to fly to Flanders by his cousin the Earl of Warwick who had just restored King Henry VI to the throne. His mother Queen Elizabeth, expecting her confinement, had then left the Tower and taken refuge at Westminster; and there the young prince was "with small pomp, like a poor man's child, christened and baptised." His godfathers were the abbot and prior, his godmother Lady Scrope; his nurse was Margaret Cobb, his doctor Serigo and his butcher John Gould.\* For six months he remained with his mother in sanctuary, until in April 1471 King Edward returned in triumph to London and took his wife and son to Baynard's Castle, the palace of his mother the Duchess of York.

The battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury and the deaths of Henry VI and his son soon followed; and King Edward then created his heir Prince of Wales. The lords swore him allegiance, a council was appointed to control his household, and the duchy of Cornwall and county of Chester were granted him as an appanage. When he was three his uncle Earl Rivers was appointed his governor and the Bishop of Rochester his tutor, while rules were drawn up for his education by the King his father:

1. He shall arise every morning at a convenient time and till he be ready none but Earl Rivers, his chamberlain

\* Chr White Rose, 120.

or chaplain to enter his chamber, and one other chaplain to say mattins ; then to go to his chapel or chamber to hear mass.

2. That he hear every holiday divine service.

3. That on principal feasts sermons be preached before him.

4. That he breakfast immediately after mass, and be occupied one hour at his school before he go to meat ; and to be at his dinner at a convenient hour, and that he be reasonably served, and his dishes borne by worshipful folk wearing our livery.

5. That no man sit at his board but as Earl Rivers shall allow, and that there be read before him noble stories as behoveth a prince to understand ; and that the communications in his presence be of virtue, honour, cunning, wisdom and deeds of worship, and of nothing that shall move him to vice.

6. After his meat, in eschewing of idleness, that he be occupied two hours at his school ; and after in his presence to be shewed all such convenient disports and exercises as belong to his estate to have experience in.

7. To go to his evensong at a convenient hour and soon after that to be at his supper.

8. After supper that he have all such honest disports as may be conveniently devised for his recreation.

9. That he be in his chamber, and for all night ; and the travers to be drawn by nine of the clock, and that all persons then from thence to be avoided, except for attendance.

10. That sure and good watch be nightly had and kept about his person for safeguard.

11. That discreet and convenient persons be appointed to give attendance on his person, from his rising to his going to bed.\*

Lord Rivers, a scholar and a patron of Caxton, carefully supervised his nephew's training. Edward with his brother Richard, Duke of York, his junior by two years, lived usually at the palace at Westminster or

\* Chr. White Rose, 154

else in the west of England where the Woodvilles had acquired a considerable position.

At fourteen he was to have been released from the control of his Council, but before he had attained that age his father died ; and on April 9th 1483 when he was only twelve he succeeded to the crown. He was then staying at Ludlow ; and as his mother's family feared that attempts might be made to prevent his succession his half-brother, Lord Dorset, Elizabeth's son by her first marriage, at once seized the treasure in the Tower of London. The Council however were anxious for peace and they persuaded the Queen to write to Edward telling him not to bring more than 2,000 men with him to the capital.

There were two distinct parties at court, the Queen's relatives, and the friends of the late King. The former were led by Rivers, the latter by Hastings, the Lord Chamberlain. Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the only surviving brother of Edward IV, was not definitely on either side, but he had great influence and he had been left as Protector of the Kingdom. At this time he was fighting on the Scottish border ; but on receipt of the news of Edward's death he came south with his cousin the Duke of Buckingham and by April 29th he was at Northampton awaiting the arrival of his nephew from Ludlow.

Gloucester was not a man to delay. That night he asked Rivers and Grey, another son of the Queen's, to dinner and on the following morning he sent them under arrest to Pontefract Castle. He then rode out to meet his nephew who had halted for the night at Stoney Stratford. There Buckingham told Edward that his mother's relations had been conspiring against him, to which Edward replied " What my brother marquess hath done I cannot saie, but in good faith I doe well answer for mine uncle Rivers and my brother here that he be innocent of anie such matter."\*

With much outward respect Gloucester now escorted the young King to London which Edward entered dressed in blue velvet, Gloucester riding beside him in black. For a

\* Holmshed, iii, 375.

few days the boy was lodged in the bishop's palace and he was then taken to the Tower. The Queen on hearing of the arrest of her brother and son had again fled for refuge to the abbey, taking her daughters and the young Duke of York with her; for no one knew what to expect.

Gloucester developed his plans quickly. After formally assuming the office of Protector he called a council in the Tower to settle the details of his nephew's coronation. During the meeting he suddenly accused Lord Hastings of treason and had him executed out of hand. He then confined the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Ely, and a few days later he had Rivers and Grey beheaded at Pontefract. But it was necessary for him to have not only the King but also the Duke of York in his power: so he sent the Archbishop of Canterbury to induce the Queen to let her younger son join his brother. After much fear and hesitation she consented, saying to the boy as he left her 'Fare well mine owne sweete sonne, God send you good keeping: let me kisse you yet once ere you go, for God knoweth when we shall kisse together againe.' And therewith she kissed him and blessed him and went her waie, leaving the child weeping as fast." \* On June 16th York joined his brother "being brought through the citie honourable into the Tower, out of which after that daie they never came abroad."

Gloucester now "opened himself more boldlic," and though there was much doubt as to what was really happening "little by little all folke withdrew from the Tower and drew unto Crosbies in Bishopsgate Street, where the Protector kept his household. The Protector had the resort, the King in maner desolate." The coronation was ordered to be deferred; and on June 22nd a sermon was preached by the Mayor's brother declaring that the children of Edward IV were illegitimate; while two days later Buckingham addressed the aldermen on the same lines. The suggestion was that Edward IV by a pre-contract to another lady had rendered his marriage

\* Holinshed, iii. 377.

with the Queen invalid ; it was added that the issue of Clarence, Edward's second brother, was debarred from the throne by his attainder, and that therefore Gloucester was the real heir. The ground being thus prepared a deputation waited on the duke at Baynard's Castle on June 25th and offered him the crown. After some apparent hesitation he accepted ; and from that moment the eleven weeks' reign of Edward V was at an end. "When he had shewed it unto him that he should not reigne but his uncle should have the crowne he was sore abashed and began to sigh and said 'Alas I would that my uncle would let me have my life yet though I lose my kingdom.' "Both the young princes were now shut up and all others removed from them, onelie one called Blacke Will set to serve them and see them sure. After which time the prince never tied his points nor ought wrought of himself but with that young babe his brother lingered with thought and heavinesse."\*

In July the Duke of Gloucester was crowned as Richard III, and shortly afterwards he started on a progress to the west of England. While on the road he despatched a messenger to Brackenbury, the Lieutenant of the Tower, directing him to put the two princes to death. Brackenbury refused, and Richard then sent Sir James Tirrell to him with an order to hand over the keys of the Tower for a night. Sir Thomas More gives a contemporary and probably correct account of the business. "Sir James Tirrell devised that they should be murdered in their beds, to the execution whereof he appointed Miles Forrest, a fellow fleshed in murder before time, and John Dighton his own horse-keeper, a big, broad and strong knave. Then all other being removed from them, this Miles Forrest and John Dighton about midnight (the seelie children lying in their beds) came into the chamber and suddenlie lapping them up among the clothes, so bewrapped them and entangled them, keeping downe by force the feather-bed and pillowes hard unto their mouths, that within a while,

\* Holinshed, iii. 401.

smothered and stifled, their breathe failing, they gave up to God their innocent soules.”\* This happened late in August 1483. Tirrell, after he had seen their naked bodies, ordered them to be buried below the White Tower “at the stair foot under a great heape of stones”; and there in the time of Charles II their remains were discovered and then buried in Westminster Abbey. Of their murderers More writes some years later, “Miles Forrest at St Martin’s piece-meal rotted awaie: Dighton indeed yet walketh alive, in good possibilitie to be hanged yer he dic: Sir James Tirrell died at the Tower Hill beheaded for treason.”\*

There is a limning of Edward V in a manuscript at Lambeth, another in a book of hours belonging to his aunt the Duchess of Burgundy, and a panel in St. George’s Chapel at Windsor. They all shew a child’s face, chubby and bland. His parents were both full of individuality, and he was educated by a man of attainments and character, but of his personality, beyond the two speeches reported above, nothing is known. His life and his reign were the shortest of those of all the English Kings.

\* Holinshed, iii. 402.







RICHARD III

From his picture in the National Portrait Gallery

## RICHARD III

1452-1485

RICHARD III, called Crookback, Duke of Gloucester and afterwards King of England, was born on October 2nd 1452 at Fotheringay Castle in Northamptonshire. He was the eighth son and eleventh child of Richard, Duke of York by Lady Cecily Neville, daughter of Ralph Earl of Westmoreland. "From afore his birth he was ever froward—the duchess his mother could not be delivered of him uncut, and he came into the world with *his feet forward and, as fame rumoureth, not untoothed*. He was small, ill-featured, crookbacked and his left arm somewhat withered." \*

Richard was brought up with his brother George, and early in the Wars of the Roses the two boys were captured by the Lancastrians at Ludlow and given into ward to their aunt the Duchess of Buckingham. In July 1460, after the battle of Northampton, they were released and taken by their mother up to London where they were lodged in Sir John Falstaff's house in Southwark, their eldest brother "the Lord of Marche, comyng every day to see them." † Six months later their father the Duke of York was killed at Wakefield, and in February 1461 George and Richard were sent for safety to Utrecht. But within a few weeks Edward of March seized the crown and after the battle of Towton he brought his young brothers back to England. At Edward's coronation they were created Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester respectively and made Knights of the Bath. Shortly afterwards Richard was appointed Admiral of England and given con-

\* Holinshed, iii. 362.

† Paston Letters, iii. 233.

siderable estates, and in 1466 he was elected a Knight of the Garter. At Archbishop Neville's translation banquet in that year he is mentioned as "sytyng in the cheefe chamber with his cousins the Lorde of Warwicke's daughters." Warwick who was growing jealous of Edward's favours to the Queen's family tried to seduce the two brothers from their allegiance. With Clarence he succeeded, giving him his elder daughter to wife; but Richard, though still a boy, was warier and stuck closely to the King.

In appearance Richard had little to recommend him. He had none of the good looks of his brother Edward. But to make up for these deficiencies he was pleasant and polite, active and temperate, full of talent, energy and courage. He was also a born soldier. In 1469 he accompanied Edward to the north to suppress Robin of Redesdale's rising and there he got his first ideas of fighting. The desertion of Clarence to Warwick had much improved his position. He stayed with Edward during his captivity at Middleham, accompanied him to London after his release and was then appointed High Constable of England. He was again with Edward in his flight overseas and his return in 1471, and took a leading part in his restoration. He led the vanguard at Barnet and Tewkesbury, and after the latter battle he sentenced the leading Lancastrians to death and probably had a hand in the murder of King Henry's son, the young Prince of Wales. On arriving in London a few days later "he slue with his own hands King Henrie the Sixt, being prisoner in the Tower, as men constantlie said, and that without commandement or knowledge of the King, which would undoubtedlie (if he had intended that thing) have appointed that butcherlie office to some other than his owne borne brother." \*

These striking services of Richard were well rewarded by his brother the King. He was given Crosby Place in Bishopsgate Street, the house in which Sir Thomas More subsequently wrote his history: he was made Great

\* Holinshed, iii. 362.

Chamberlain of England, enriched with lands of the proscribed Lancastrians, and encouraged by Edward to marry Warwick's second daughter Anne, the young widow of Richard's recent victim the Prince of Wales. But this alliance was as distasteful to her and her family as it was to Clarence, who had married Warwick's elder daughter and wished to keep the earl's inheritance for himself. Clarence accordingly disguised his sister-in-law as a kitchen maid and did his best to conceal her, until Richard placed her in sanctuary at St. Martin's-le-Grand. After a long dispute Edward divided the Warwick estates between his two brothers; but not until 1473 did Richard's marriage take place, for Anne was only fifteen and was his first cousin. Richard then established himself at Middleham Castle, the former home of his father-in-law, and there in 1474 his only son Edward was born. In the following year he went with Edward to France for the signature of the treaty of Pecquigny, of which he seems to have disapproved. He visited Louis XI at Amiens "*et luy fit le roy de tres beaux presens, comme de vaiselle d'or, et des chevaux bien accoustres.*" \*

In 1476 the Duchess of Clarence died; and two years later her husband, who had never been trusted by Edward since his friendship with Warwick, was attainted of treason. What part Richard played in his brother's death is unknown. Contemporaries suggest that he helped it forward covertly, being "hartilye minded to his wealth," and he certainly benefited by it in offices, titles and lands. All his interests lay in loyalty to Edward; and the latter who was now immersed in pleasure, willingly trusted him. A promising soldier and a subtle diplomat Richard was appointed general in the north, and in two campaigns against the Scots he distinguished himself enough to receive the thanks of Parliament. On the Welsh marches where he was Warden he was equally successful, and when in April 1483 Edward IV died Richard had become by far the most important figure in the land. Constable, Chamberlain and Admiral of England, with a great revenue

\* Commynes, 4, 107.

and a considerable reputation he was now left Protector of the Kingdom and of its new King, a child of twelve.

On receiving the news of his brother's death and his nephew's accession Richard left the Scottish border and posted south. He was joined on the way by his cousin and friend the Duke of Buckingham. The latter, a descendant of Thomas of Woodstock and John of Gaunt, was one of the principal peers in England, but though married to the Queen's sister he was an opponent of the Woodvilles. At Northampton the two dukes met Rivers and Grey, the Queen's brother and son, who were escorting the young King to London. Richard dined with them, sent them dishes from his table and assured them of his good will; but in the morning he despatched them in custody to Pontefract. When he met Edward he "spared nothing of reverence, baring the head and bending the knee, saying that he would preserve the safety of the King and protect him, for he knew that the men around him were conspiring against his life and honour."\* Uncle and nephew travelled together to London. On their arrival Edward was lodged first at the bishop's palace and then at the Tower, while Richard went to his own house at Crosby Place. There he formally accepted the office of Protector with almost regal authority. It is probable that he had already determined to seize the crown.

The Queen had taken sanctuary with her younger children at Westminster. Richard at once deprived her partisans of their places, taking the great seal from the Archbishop of York and the command of the Tower from Lord Dorset. Even the lords opposed to the Greys and Woodvilles became nervous; and Hastings, the late King's chamberlain, tried to get Edward out of his uncle's power. Meanwhile Richard was writing to his friends in the north for men-at-arms to protect him against the Queen. To Lord Neville he says "as ever ye love me, and yore awne weale and security, and this Realme, come to me with that ye may make, defensably arrayde, in all

\* Hist. Croy. Cont., 565.

hast that is possyble. . . . Do me nowe gode servyce as ye have always before don and I trust so to remember you as shalle be the makynge of you and yours. Wrytten at London this 4 day of June with the hande of your hartely lovyng cousyn and master R. Gloucester." \*

On June 13th a Council was held in the Tower to settle on the coronation. Bishop Morton of Ely, who was present, describes the scene. Richard, pleasant at first, soon shewed "a woonderfull soure angrie countenance, knitting the browes, frowning and frotting and gnawing on his lips, and so sat him doune in his place. All the lords were much dismaid and sore marvelled at this manner of sudden change. Then when he had sitten still a while, thus he began: 'What were they worthie to have that compasse and imagine the destruction of me, being so neere of blood to the King, and protector of his royall person and his realme?' At this question all the lords sat sore astonied musing much by whome this question should be meant, of which everie man wist himself cleere. Then the lord chamberlain said that they were worthie to be punished as heinous traitors; and all the others affirmed the same. That is, quoth he, yonder sorceresse my brother's wife, and other with her (meaning the queene). At these words manie of the other lords were greatlie abashed that favoured her. Then said the protector 'Ye shall all see in what wise that sorceresse and that other witch, Shore's wife, have by their sorcerie and witchcraft wasted my bodie.' And he plucked up his doublet sleeve to his elbow upon his left arme, where he shewed a withered arme and small, as it was never other. Hereupon everie man's mind sore misgave them, well perceiving that this matter was but a quarrell. For they well wist that the queene was too wise to go about anie such follie; and also if she would, yet would she of all folke least make Shore's wife of her counsell, whome of all women she most hated. And also no man was there present but well knew that his arme was ever such since his birth. Natheless the lord chamberlaine said 'Cer-

\* Paston Letters, vi. 72.

tainlie, my lord, if they have so heinouslie doone, they be worthie heinous punishment.' 'What' (quoth the protector) 'thou servest me with ifs and with ands, I tell thee they have so doone, and that I will make good on thy bodie, traitor': and therewith as in a great anger he clapped his fist upon the boord a great rap. At which token one cried 'Treason' without the chamber. Therewith a doore clapped and in come there rushing men in harnesse, as manie as the chamber might hold. And anon the protector said to Lord Hastings: 'I arrest thee traitor.' 'What me my lord' (quoth he) 'Yea thee, traitor,' quoth the protector. And an other let fie at Lord Stanlie which shranke at the stroke, and fell under the table, or else his head had been cleft to the teeth. Then were they all quicklie bestowed in diverse chambers, except the lord chamberlaine, whom the Protector bade speed and shrive him apace, 'for by Saint Paule (quoth he) I will not to dinner till I see thy head off.' It booted him not to ask whie, but hastilie took a priest at adventure and made a short shrift for longer would not be suffered, the protector made so much hast to dinner. So was he brought forth to the greene and his head laid down upon a log of timber and there stricken off." \*

After this surprising episode the Archbishop of York, Lord Stanley, the Bishop of Ely and several others were confined, while Richard and Buckingham shewed themselves to the people in 'rusty armour, marvellous ill-favoured' saying they had barely escaped assassination.

The coronation was now set back to November, and Richard sent Cardinal Bouchier to get the Duke of York away from the Queen—he needed possession of both his nephews. After some resistance the young prince was allowed to join his brother in the Tower, whence neither ever after emerged. But as Richard still met with little sympathy among the people, a preacher was suborned to suggest at St. Paul's that Edward IV and his children were illegitimate; while at the Guildhall Buckingham told the same tale to the common council. During the sermon

\* Holinshed, iii. 380.

Richard appeared as if by accident, while at the council his partisans cheered his name, but on neither occasion was there any enthusiasm. He saw that he must act more boldly. Accordingly on June 25th some of the Parliament were assembled, and after recapitulating his arguments Buckingham led a deputation of them to Richard at Baynard's Castle and asked him to accept the crown. With a short show of modesty Richard agreed and he was at once proclaimed King. A few days later Rivers and Grey were executed at Pontefract.

The new King's supporters now arrived from the north "evil apparelled and worse harnessed," but they sufficed to overawe the capital. On July 6th Richard and his consort were crowned at Westminster, Stanley, released from custody, acting as High Constable. The correct ceremonies were so scrupulously followed that the King and Queen walked barefoot from Westminster Hall to the Abbey and at their anointing "put off their robes at the high altar and stode all nakyd from the medell upwards."

This function completed Richard set out on a progress through the country. He well knew the dangers of a divided allegiance and was anxious to confirm his position. Twelve years earlier he had not hesitated to kill one helpless King, a captive in the Tower: he was now no more scrupulous with another. On his way to the west he sent back orders to make away with the princes: but the officer concerned demurred. When Richard received the reply "he tooke such displeasure and thought that the same night he said unto a secret page of his 'Ah, whom shall a man trust? Those that I have brought up myselfe, those that I had weent would most surelie serve me, even those faile me and at my commandement will do nothing for me.' 'Sir' quoth his page, 'there lieth one on your pallet without to doo your Grace's pleasure'—meaning by this Sir James Tirrell. Upon this King Richard arose (for this communication had he sitting on the draught, a convenient carpet for such a council) and came out into the pallet chamber. Then said the King merrilie 'What sirs are ye in bed so soon,' and calling up Sir James brake to



him secretly his mind." \* Next day Tirrell rode to London and by the hands of his servants had the two princes smothered in their beds.

In August Richard arrived in York, where he and the Queen walked through the streets in their crowns. Here he knighted his son and created him Prince of Wales. But though in the north he was well received, in other parts of England matters were less promising. Rumours of the princes' murder had got about, and conspiracies against the usurper soon sprang up. Buckingham, vexed at not being given an earldom which he coveted, placed himself at the head of the malcontents. Bishop Morton had been committed to his charge, and this wise and wily prelate, an old Lancastrian but a loyal servant to the late King, fostered Buckingham's complaints. He suggested to the duke that the feuds of York and Lancaster could be composed by giving the throne to Henry of Richmond, the last representative of the Red Rose, and by marrying him to the Princess Elizabeth, the late King's eldest daughter and the heiress of the White. By this plan the rival factions would be united. Buckingham assented to the scheme, and a conspiracy was set on foot. Henry who was in exile in Brittany was to invade England, while Buckingham with the Lancastrians, the Woodvilles and the Welsh were to support him.

Richard had spies and soon got wind of the plot. The weak spot was the Welsh border, for there Henry had relatives and friends. Collecting his troops Richard hemmed in Buckingham beyond the Severn, while a storm prevented Henry from crossing the Channel. The rebellion collapsed, Buckingham was caught and Richard at once had him beheaded. But the talk of an invasion went on. It was said that the Princess Elizabeth was to escape from England and join Henry in France; and to prevent this Richard invested the sanctuary at Westminster "so that none could go in or out."

In January 1484 a new Parliament met and confirmed Richard's title; but in March his son the Prince of Wales

\* Holinshed, iii. 401.

died; and henceforward he felt less secure. Among the nobles he had few friends. The chief of them were Howard, newly created Duke of Norfolk, who was Earl Marshal and High Admiral, and Stanley, the husband of Lady Margaret Beaufort, whose son by a former marriage was Henry of Richmond. Of less importance were Richard's own intimates, Lovel, Catesby and Ratcliffe.

“The Cat, the Rat and Lovel our dogge  
Rule all England under a Hog”—

the wild boar being Richard's cognisance.

The year went by without further mischance. A good intelligence service kept Richard informed of Henry's plans; and though he could not get the Duke of Brittany to hand him over, by threats and promises he persuaded Queen Elizabeth to bring her daughters out of sanctuary. The eldest of these, Henry's destined bride, Richard now proposed to marry himself. His own wife was in a decline and he publicly neglected her; “He abstained from her bed and companie, complained of her barrennesse, and recounted to the archbishop her impediments, thinking that he wold reveal to her these things. From this the bishop gathered (which well knew the complexion and usage of the King) that the queene's daies were short. A rumour was spread that she was dead; and when she heard it in sorrowful agonie she repaired to the King demanding what it should meane that he had judged her worthie to die. The King answered her with faire words, but howsoever it fortunied either by inward thought and pensiveness of hart, or by infection of poison (which is affirmed to be most likelie) within a few daies after she departed this life.”\* Freed from his wife Richard began to court his niece—whose brothers he had murdered—and at Christmas she appeared at a ball in London dressed like the late Queen. But this so greatly shocked public opinion and there was so decided an opposition to the idea of the wedding that Richard had to disown it.

During the spring of 1485 there were constant reports

\* Holinshed, iii. 430.

of Henry's preparations abroad and of Lancastrian risings at home. Richard, fierce and callous as he was, felt the tension. "He was leading a life of great agony and doubt; he was never quiet in his mind, never thought himself secure. When he went abroad his eyes whirled about, his body was privily fenced, his hand ever on his dagger. He took ill rest at nights, sore wearied with care and watch."\* To repel an invasion he needed money and men, but from Parliament he could get neither; so he was driven perforce to the old expedient of benevolences which he had just forbidden by law. Demands were sent out broadcast, and to avoid them many leading nobles slipped across to France; while in England disaffection grew apace. But Richard though harassed was active and efficient. He levied troops, assembled a fleet, issued proclamations against his rival and made all ready to resist him. When Stanley, whose loyalty he doubted, failed to join him, he held his son as a hostage, and he strove daily to rally the support of the people who now abhorred him. Thus he waited on events, unpopular and insecure but resolute and fearless.

On August 7th 1485 Henry landed at Milford Haven. His Welsh countrymen flocked to his banner, and in a fortnight he reached Lichfield. Richard had the news at Nottingham and at once prepared to fight: he marched to Leicester and encamped near Bosworth. His force was larger than Henry's though he was not so sure of his men, for they were a prey to uncertainty and suspicion. Treason was afoot, and during the night of August 21st a placard of warning was pinned on Norfolk's tent,

"Jacke of Norfolk be not to bolde  
For Dickon thy master is bought and solde."

Next morning Richard paraded his troops early, before mass could be said or breakfast made ready.† He rode a grey charger and wore his crown, looking pale and disordered though full of courage. When the two armies came in view Stanley appeared on their flank with his retainers

\* Holinshed, iii. 430.

† Hist. Croy. Cont., 574.

from Lancashire and Cheshire; as he held aloof Richard ordered his son to be beheaded, an order that was not carried out. Northumberland, another valuable supporter, also failed to join, and some of the royal troops began to desert. But Richard was determined to fight. Leading his men into action he made straight for Henry, whom he had never seen before, and after killing his standard bearer engaged him in single combat. Stanley's contingent then declared for the invaders; a panic began among Richard's men, and he was soon surrounded. His friends urged him to fly and brought him a fresh horse, but he refused saying "I will die King of England: I will not budge a foot." Then shouting "Treason, treason" he rushed again at Henry and was killed in the *mêlée* by the hand it was said of Ranulf de Redyerd. His crown was placed on Henry's head, and his body, stripped and covered with mud, was flung across a pursuivant's horse and carried into Leicester. There it was roughly buried at the Grey Friars' Abbey, until some years later Henry VII gave it a more worthy tomb. Richard was not quite thirty-three: he had been King for two years and two months, the shortest reign of any English King except that of his murdered nephew. He left no legitimate issue but one natural son, John of Gloucester, governor of Guisnes, of whom nothing more is known.

Richard III, says More, was "little of stature, of bodie greatlie deformed, the one shoulder higher than the other, his face small but his countenance cruell. When he stood musing, he would bite and chew busilie his nether lip, and the dagger which he ware he would, when he studied, with his hand pluck up and downe in the sheath, never drawing it fully oute." But though nervous and unattractive he was a good dancer and horseman, a lover of music and letters, "of a readie and quick wit, but wilie and feine and apt to dissemble."\* As a child he had been reared in an atmosphere of blood: his father, his father-in-law and one of his brothers had been killed in battle;

\* Holinshed, iii. 447.

and before he was twenty he had himself murdered a King and a Prince of Wales. But once his family was established on the throne he served his brother Edward loyally, devoting himself to the State. The death of Clarence opened a new horizon, his ambition widened, and "when the glittering bait of the crown ensnared his soul" he was ready to seize his fortune.

As a King he was not without distinction. Bacon calls him "in military virtue approved, jealous of the honour of the English nation, a good lawmaker for the common people." \* In statecraft as in warfare he was always for action, for he was impetuous and unrestrained, far less subtle than his elder brother. He antagonised Hastings who might have served him: he spoke openly of the death of his nephews: he entrusted Morton to Buckingham though he knew their respective abilities and wishes: he outraged public opinion by his treatment of his wife and his designs on his niece; and his trust in Stanley, whose son and stepson he had threatened to kill, seems the act of a madman.

He has had, it is true, few apologists. The Yorkist historians all wrote against him, and only Buck in a later age and Walpole in a lighter vein have striven to rehabilitate his name. Entirely English by birth, free from foreign blood for three generations, his character and outlook resembled those of his contemporaries Louis XI, Ferdinand of Aragon and Alexander VI. His methods of government were already common on the Continent, but in England he remains the most sinister figure of the Middle Ages. By treason and death he had helped his brother to the crown; by treason and death he had stolen it himself; by treason and death he lost it. At the end he was driven to stake all on the hazard of a single battle. Had he killed Henry his cause was won; but treason again turned the day, and Richard fell proud and obstinate, "fighting manfullie," the last King of the mighty race which had ruled England for more than three hundred years.

\* Bacon, History of King Henry VII, 2.

# THE TUDORS

1485-1603

The Tudors acquired the English crown from an unpopular usurper when the country, after fifteen years' quiet, was again threatened by civil war. Henry VII had by birth but a shadowy claim to the throne, but he represented the Lancastrians; while the Princess Elizabeth whom he had promised to marry was the heiress of the Yorkists and also of the main Plantagenet line. Their union was thus a pledge of peace.

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HENRY VII

IN 1505

From a picture in the National Portrait Gallery

## HENRY VII

1457-1509

HENRY TUDOR, Earl of Richmond and afterwards Henry VII, was born on January 28th 1457 at Pembroke Castle in Wales. He was the only and posthumous child of Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond, by Lady Margaret Beaufort, daughter and heiress of John, Duke of Somerset. Edmund Tudor was the elder son of Sir Owen Tudor, a handsome Welshman who claimed a long descent from the Princes of Wales though his father had been butler to the Bishop of Bangor; Sir Owen had been a gentleman usher to Henry V and had secretly married that King's widow, Katherine of Valois. John, Duke of Somerset was a grandson of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, by his mistress Katherine Swynford whose issue had been legitimatised by Parliament after their birth, though it was doubtful whether they could succeed to the crown. Henry thus came of an illustrious stock—his father was a half-brother of Henry VI and first cousin to Louis XI, while his mother, when her Beaufort relatives had died, became the senior representative of the Lancastrian line. Heiress of both her parents, an orphan, widow and mother before she was fourteen, she made three great marriages and played a leading part in the history of England for half a century. The progenitress of a new dynasty, the link between Plantagenets and Tudors, the founder of two famous colleges, the patron of Erasmus and Caxton, she was one of the few distinguished characters in a depraved and degenerate age.

The clandestine union of Queen Katherine had not been well regarded by the royal families of France or

England ; but Henry VI had made the best of it, creating his two half-brothers Earls of Richmond and Pembroke and finding a wife for the elder in the person of his cousin Margaret. Their son succeeded to the earldom of Richmond at his birth and was brought up by his uncle Lord Pembroke. But in 1461 the battle of Towton put the Yorkists in power. Henry VI was dethroned ; Edward IV became King ; and for the next seven years Henry of Richmond lived a precarious life in various Welsh castles, moving about partly for his health, partly to avoid capture. During these years his mother, who had now married Henry Stafford, a younger son of the Duke of Buckingham, resided at Pembroke under constant supervision.

In 1468 Harlech Castle where Henry was living with his 'nourriour' or nurse, Philip ap Hoell, was taken by Lord Herbert, who kept him for two years, wishing to marry him to his daughter. But the return of Warwick restored the Lancastrian line ; and Henry was then brought to London where he was presented to his uncle the King. Henry VI thought him so intelligent in religious matters that he said "One day this child will get all that we are fighting for." \*

King Henry however knew the weakness of his throne, and he advised that his young nephew should be taken abroad. A few months later Edward IV returned in triumph ; Henry VI and his son were murdered, and the last hopes of Lancaster seemed to have disappeared. Those of its leaders who were not slain fled to the Continent ; and Henry of Richmond, whose mother was now the heiress of her family, was taken to Brittany by his uncle Pembroke. There for the next twelve years he remained, the guest or prisoner of the duke, the constant preoccupation of his cousins the Kings of France and England, who were equally anxious to secure him. It was during this time that his real education took place ; for hitherto his health and safety had been the main objects of his guardians. He was exception-

\* Mem. Henry VII, 14.

ally studious and alert; and his tutor used to say that he had never known a boy so quick for his age. He grew up thin, fair and slender, palefaced but comely, active and well formed; and he was so distinguished "for his noble manners, the grace and beauty of his expression and his kingly bearing" that the Duke of Brittany "hearing that he was likely to be one day ruler of England treated him with the greatest civility, kindness and beneficence." \*

Edward IV was well versed in the play of fortune, and he strove persistently to get Henry into his hands, promising to marry him to one of his daughters. Once he almost succeeded; but at the last moment the Duke of Brittany changed his mind, and Henry, who was lying ill of an ague, escaped by taking sanctuary at St. Malo. The experiences of exile had hardened his body and trained his mind. He had learnt economy and reserve, and had studied the politics of his own and other countries. At Edward's death in 1483 Henry was twenty-six: he had become a cautious, thoughtful and determined man, able and ambitious to avail himself of his name, of future chances and of the help of a loyal party.

During these years his mother had remained in England more or less at peace with the reigning powers. After the death of her second husband she had married Lord Stanley, a friend and minister of Edward IV, and she had been allowed to correspond with Henry and to send him money. The death of Edward, the murder of his two sons and the usurpation of Richard of Gloucester lowered the prestige of the Yorkists and shook their strength. They divided into two factions, the adherents of Richard and of the Woodvilles. It was the moment for the Lancastrians to raise their heads; and Richard made this easier for them by arresting Stanley and Bishop Morton, two of the late King's most trusted advisers. The former was Henry of Richmond's stepfather; the latter had been in old days a friend of Queen

\* Mem. Henry VII, 13, 17.

Margaret's. Stanley was soon released, but his pride had been mortified; Morton was entrusted to Buckingham, Richard's closest friend but a close connection of the Countess of Richmond. Buckingham thought himself insufficiently rewarded by the new King; and in Brecknock Castle the bishop exploited his grievances, persuading him that Henry, the heir of Lancaster, could rescue the country from a tyrant, and by marrying King Edward's daughter, would retain for the Yorkists their rights. The Queen Dowager, her brother Lord Dorset and the Countess of Richmond all came into the plot, and a request was sent for Henry's approval. The contemporary ballad of the Lady Bessie (Elizabeth of York) describes the messenger's journey to Brittany, where the castle porter tells him how to distinguish Henry.

"I shall thee teach, said the porter then,  
The prince of England to know truly :  
See where he shooteth at the butts  
And with him are lords three.  
He weareth a gown of velvet black  
And it is coated above the knee :  
With a long visage and pale  
Thereby the prince know may ye :  
A wart he hath, the porter said,  
A little also above the chin,  
His face is white, his wart is red  
No more than the head of a small pin." \*

Money was provided both by Yorkists and Lancastrians, while Henry also borrowed from his host the Duke of Brittany: "*Nous vous mandons que allowez dix mil escuz d'or, par maniere de preste, a nostre trescher et tresamé cousin le Sire de Richemont.*" †

On October 12th 1483 Henry sailed from St. Malo with forty ships; but a Channel storm scattered his fleet and he found the Devonshire coast so well guarded that he had to return to France. Meanwhile his friends had

\* Gairdner, Rich. III, 354.

† Letters, Hen. VII, i. 54.

risen in the south and west of England. Dorset had proclaimed him at Exeter, Buckingham at Brecon, and Woodville at Salisbury, while in Berkshire and Kent forces had assembled to support his attempt. But Buckingham could not cross the swollen Severn, his Welshmen deserted, and he was taken prisoner and executed by Richard. His defeat marred the venture; and though Dorset and Morton escaped abroad, many Lancastrians were attainted, while the Countess of Richmond's own life was only spared on condition that her husband should keep her "in some secret place so that she might not communicate with her son."

The disappointment was severe, but it did not dismay Henry. At Christmas in the cathedral of Rennes five hundred Lancastrian exiles did him homage as their future King; while Henry, though his love was promised elsewhere, solemnly swore to marry Elizabeth of York when he had got the throne. This news and the recent rising greatly disquieted Richard. He sent envoys to Brittany asking for the surrender of Henry, and supplemented his request by offering a thousand archers to the duke and bribes to his ministers. His proposals were not without effect; and Henry, warned by Morton, fled to Charles VIII in Paris. His visit to the French court was a success, for the King admired "his handsome face, his natural prudence and his pleasant facility in speaking French; all the nobles shewed him the greatest affection, and the kindness of the Duchess of Bourbon, the King's sister, was incredible." \* His prospects again looked promising, his adherents increased and he was soon able to prepare a fresh expedition.

Across the water Richard was in sore straits. He had just lost his son and his wife; while his project of marrying his niece, Elizabeth of York, had led to a public outcry. By the summer of 1485 he had become so unpopular that the time seemed ripe to attack him. Collecting a small force in Normandy Henry sailed from Harfleur on August 1st. He evaded the English fleet, landed at Milford

\* Mem. Hen. VII, 25.

Haven and marching rapidly on Shrewsbury was joined there by numbers of his countrymen. At Stafford he met Sir William Stanley, a brother of his stepfather: the latter did not dare to come himself for Richard held his son hostage and had threatened to kill him. On August 21st Henry arrived at Atherston "his army marching under the red dragon standard of Wales." \* The Stanleys were near at hand, and deserters from the royal camp at Leicester began to come in. Early next morning the two armies engaged at Bosworth. Richard's troops were discouraged and disloyal, though their leader "fought like a lion." He made straight for his rival, but "the Earl of Richmond withstood his violence and kept him at the sword's point without advantage longer than his companions thought." † At the critical moment the Stanleys threw their weight on Henry's side; Richard was struck down and slain, and his troops at once dispersed. Stanley, picking up the crown from a thornbush, placed it on Henry's head and saluted him as King. The Wars of the Roses, which had decimated the English nobles for a generation, had at last come to an end.

On September 3rd Henry arrived in London driving in a closed coach, the first King to do so. In October he was crowned, and in November he met Parliament. He had already rewarded his supporters by making Pembroke Duke of Bedford, Stanley Earl of Derby and Courtenay Earl of Devon, and now "speaking with his own mouth he explained to the two Houses his assumption of the crown by just heredity and the judgment of God." ‡ His title was confirmed without further question and he was requested to marry the Lady Elizabeth. This he did on January 18th 1486, a papal bull granting the necessary dispensation for an alliance between cousins and reciting his various rights to the throne, by conquest, inheritance, election and Act of Parliament. At her wedding the Queen carried red and white roses.

Yet Henry's position was still open to cavil, for the real heirs of either line were his mother and his wife, while

\* Trevelyan, 266.

† Holmshead, 444.

‡ Pollard, i. 25.

if women were debarred Warwick, the son of Clarence, might be a serious rival. To meet such contingencies Henry put Warwick in the Tower, proscribed the chief of his late opponents and instituted a royal bodyguard, the gentlemen-at-arms of later days. Such a protection was needed, for on his first progress to York he was nearly captured by Lovell, Richard's former chamberlain. But the rebels were soon scattered and Henry met with a loyal welcome, the citizens of York shouting "Our Lord preserve that sweet well-favoured face." \*

In September 1486 Henry went with his Queen to Winchester, and there she bore her first son Arthur, named after his famous forbear. The birth of an heir stimulated the malcontents; and Lambert Simnel, a joiner's son from Oxford, set up in Ireland saying he was the Earl of Warwick. Simnel had been schooled in his part by Margaret of Burgundy, Edward IV's sister, who supported him with men and money; and in Dublin Kildare, the Lord Deputy, received and crowned him. Henry dealt with his opponent quickly. He brought the real Warwick out of the Tower and paraded him through the streets of London; on Simnel's landing in Lancashire he took him prisoner; and when the latter had confessed his imposture he placed him as a scullion in the royal kitchen.

After this success Henry returned to London, where he had the Queen crowned. A committee of the Council was set up in the Star Chamber to punish delinquents who were too powerful for the ordinary law; grants were voted by Parliament to assist Henry's friends the Bretons against the attacks of the French; and embassies were sent to Spain and the Empire to secure help for the same purpose. After two short expeditions against Scotland and Burgundy the King embarked on a campaign against France by laying siege to Boulogne. But Charles VIII had now married the Duchess of Brittany; their former friendship to Henry was recalled; and the latter, who much preferred money to war, was bought

\* Leland Coll., iv. 187.



off. These military ventures though inglorious had been cheap; and Henry with uncertain allies and lukewarm subjects had come out of them with sufficient credit and with the name of a diplomatist. But he still had difficulties before him. In Ireland there was a Yorkist faction and the usual discontent; while in Burgundy the duchess, 'Henry's Juno' as she was called, remained his constant and bitter foe. Between them a second impostor was produced who for five years caused Henry considerable trouble. He was a native of Tournay named Perkin Warbeck with a clever tongue and a good appearance, and he declared himself to be Richard of York, younger son of Edward IV. Helped by the duchess and the Irish he visited the court of Scotland, where he managed to marry a daughter of Lord Huntly's and did much mischief. But when in 1497 he landed in Cornwall with a small contingent of Irish troops he was easier to deal with. At Exeter he was defeated by Henry, and on his surrender he was sent to the Tower. Two years later, after an abortive effort to escape, he was executed with the unfortunate Earl of Warwick, a more genuine and more innocent pretender.

These several attempts on his crown urged Henry to consolidate his national position; and he developed a foreign policy the main idea of which was dynastic alliances. By now he had another son as well as two daughters. The elder, Margaret, he contracted to James IV of Scotland, making a treaty of peace with him; and in 1501 he arranged a marriage for his son Arthur with Katherine of Aragon, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. But less than six months after the wedding the prince died; and in the following year Henry lost his wife to whom he had never been deeply attached. Determined not to forego his daughter-in-law's dowry he suggested marrying her himself, and when her parents objected he substituted his second son Henry, now Prince of Wales. For himself he turned successively to the Dowager Queen of Naples, the mad

Queen of Castile and a princess of Savoy; but all these matrimonial plans came to nought.

In 1506, by a stroke of luck, he got possession of the Earl of Suffolk, a nephew of King Richard's who had fled abroad and who was now Henry's only serious rival. The Archduke Philip and his wife, a sister of Katherine's, had been driven into Dartmouth while on their way to Spain. Henry brought them to Windsor and kept them for nearly three months as his guests, diverting them in the most hospitable manner he could devise. Parsimonious as a rule he could on occasion be lavish, and he seized this opportunity of promoting his Continental projects. He made the Archduke a Knight of the Garter and entertained him with a round of sports and sightseeing. "On Tuesday jousts; on Wednesday horsebaiting; on Thursday to Baynard's Castle and hawking by the way; on Friday to Our Lady of Barking and so to the Tower at gunshot: on Saturday to Westminster and dined with the abbot and prior: on Monday wrestling between Englishmen and Spaniards and baiting between the horse and the bear: on Tuesday both Kings dined together, served with four courses. On Saturday to Windsor, all the children of Eton standing along the bars of the churchyard." \*

Amid these festivities Henry did real business, negotiating a favourable treaty with Flanders and at last persuading Philip to hand over Suffolk, who was at once lodged in the Tower. Henry then felt secure, and for the rest of his reign he devoted himself to his favourite pursuit of amassing money. Freed from the slight restraint of his wife and able to manage the government without calling Parliament he grew rapacious and almost absolute. He had a strong minister in Morton and he ruled with justice and discernment; but his taxes on the people and his repression of the nobles were unpopular, while his own early experiences had made him harsh and suspicious.

In 1508 his health began to fail: he had long suffered

\* Hen. VII, Mem., 303.

from gout and it now affected his lungs. In the winter he grew worse and on April 5th 1509 he died at Richmond at the age of fifty-two, having reigned nearly twenty-four years. He was buried in the magnificent chapel which Torrigiano built for him in Westminster Abbey. Of his five children three survived him, Henry VIII, Margaret, Queen of Scotland, and Mary, successively Queen of France and Duchess of Suffolk.

Henry VII was "a comely personage—his body graceful and his stature just above the average: his eyes grey, his teeth few, his hair sparse.\* He looked rather like a churchman and was best when he spoke."† his portrait by Holbein at Windsor shews a thoughtful and serious face. Not specially distinguished in the lists or the field he was an expert in the more peaceful pursuits of administration and finance. From his earliest days he had been brought up in an atmosphere of danger and dissimulation. "He told me" says Commynes "that from the time he was five years old he had been an exile or a prisoner." Always pressed for money in his youth he had learnt its value, and when he became King he fortified himself by acquiring it. Though a stern enforcer of the law he would compound nearly all offences for cash. When Lord Oxford, one of his oldest and most powerful supporters, welcomed him with an escort of retainers in the livery of the de Veres, Henry thanked him for his courtesy but fined him £10,000 for breaking the law against maintenance.‡ His famous tax-gatherers Dudley and Empson, two Speakers of the House of Commons, "fleeced the people to the bone," while his Chancellor Morton invented "the argument of the fork, by which the rich paid because their wealth was patent and the thrifty because they had plenty put by." By such shifts Henry left in the exchequer nearly £1,800,000, a vast sum for those days. "Yet he was an almsgiver in secret; when it was necessary he could spend, for though he never

\* Polydore Vergil, *Hist.*, v. 125.

† Bacon, *Hist. of Hen.* 7, 246.

‡ Pollard, *Reign of Hen. VII*, ii. 65.

spared charges which his affairs required and though his buildings were magnificent, his rewards were very limited.”\* His chapels at Westminster and Windsor, his palace at Richmond, and his hospital at the Savoy attest his taste and generosity. In religion he was orthodox, sufficiently devout, and quite ready when necessary to burn heretics.

Bacon a century after Henry's death describes his manners and character in detail. “Of high mind and loving his own will as one that revered himself and would reign indeed. His Queen notwithstanding she had presented him with divers children, and with a crown also, although he would not acknowledge it, could do nothing with him. Towards her he was nothing uxorious, nor scarce indulgent, but companionable and respectful and without jealousy, but his aversion towards the House of York was so predominant as it found place not only in his wars and councils but in her chamber and bed. His mother he revered much, heard little. For any person agreeable to him for society, he had none. He had nothing in him of vainglory, but yet kept state and majesty to the height. To his confederates abroad he was constant and just but not open, but went substantially to his own business. His reputation was great at home yet it was greater abroad. He was careful and liberal to obtain intelligence, for which purpose his instructions were even extreme, curious and articulate. To his council he did refer much, and sat often in person. He kept a strait hand on his nobility and chose rather to advance clergymen and lawyers, which were more obsequious to him, but had less interest in the people: which made for his absoluteness but not for his safety. He was not afraid of an able man as Louis XI was, but contrariwise he was served by the ablest men to be found, and as he chose well so he held them up well. He was a prince sad, serious and full of thoughts and secret observations, and full of notes and memorials of his own hand as whom to employ, whom to reward, whom to beware of and the like. There is a tale that his monkey, set

\* Bacon, 233, 237.

on as it was said by one of his chamber, tore his principal notebook all to pieces when by chance it lay forth : whereat the court, which liked not those pensive accounts, was tickled with sport. He was indeed full of apprehensions and suspicions, but as he did easily take them so he did easily check and master them : his thoughts were so many they could not well always stand together. He was agreeable and both well and fair spoken ; rather studious than learned ; reading most books that were of any worth in the French tongue, yet he understood the Latin. For his pleasures there is no news of them ; yet he could interrogate well touching beauty. Never prince was more wholly given to his affairs, nor in them more of himself : 'The Solomon of England' he may be esteemed with Louis XI and Ferdinando one of the *tres magi* of those ages. What he minded he compassed." \*

Of Henry's personal tastes not much is known. He hunted with moderate regularity and introduced 'the French fashion of driving game into nets.' His preserves extended from Hyde Park to Hampstead, and he much enlarged his chase at Richmond, where he rebuilt the old palace and made it his favourite residence. He was interested in poetry, painting and architecture, and he encouraged the Renaissance in England. He was a connoisseur in Welsh pedigrees, a reader of romances and he started the formation of the royal library ; the Wardrobe accounts have many items for binding his books. He protected explorers and collected rarities : there are numerous items in his privy purse expenses for payments to those who brought him 'wild cats, leopards, and poppinjays,' and to 'the Bristol merchants that have been in the newfound island.' †

At need he could shew his wit. When a bishop protesting against taxes reminded him that he was '*pastor populi*' Henry replied "*Si me pastorem te decet esse pecus.*" ‡ Mainly his own minister, as meticulous in detail as in matters of import, nothing was too small for

\* Bacon, 243.

† Way, 128.

‡ Letters Hen. VII, i. xxvi.

his supervision. He corrected with his own hand the drafts of despatches and checked the treasury receipts, and in pageants and processions it was he who settled which lord should walk before another. But though a great stickler for ceremony he had a pleasant courtesy. When welcoming Philip of Burgundy at Windsor he said he could not have dined well unless he had seen him and bade him good morrow, "and so with divers other good words they both proceeded to the dining chamber and stood by the fire together." \*

With women he seems to have been cold, though full of interest about them. His instructions to his envoys sent to appraise the charms of the Queen of Naples leave little to the imagination. They were ordered "to mark what estate she kept, to ascertain what languages she spoke, to describe the features of her body and her visage, whether painted, fat or lean, sharp or round, cheerful, frowning, melancholy or blushing. To note the clearness of her skin, the colours of her hair, brows and teeth (answer 'they were fair and clean'), to mark well the fashion of her nose (answer 'she is much like nosed to the Queen her mother') ; her complexion (very fair sanguine and clean), her arms, her hands, her neck, her breasts and paps whether they be big or small (answer 'the said Queen's breasts be somewhat great and full, inasmuch as they were trussed somewhat high') ; to mark whether there were any hair about her lips, and to endeavour to speak with the said young Queen fasting and to approach near her mouth to feel the condition of her breath whether it be sweet or not (this they did not discover) ; to observe her feet and slippers, her health, her diet (she eateth well her meat twice a day and drinketh sometime ipocras), and lastly what her fortune may be." †

Discreet, temperate and laborious, Henry had to confirm a position which he had won as much by his sword as by his birth or the suffrage of his people. Long consideration of foreign affairs had taught him the advantage of absolute rule. To ensure this money was the first requisite,

\* Hen. VII, Mem, 287.

† Hen. VII, Mem., 225 et seq.

and in getting it he never paused. The nobles were broken by war, the Church was harassed by heresy, the Commons were rarely summoned, so that he was able to continue the system of Edward IV and to transmit it, strengthened and enlarged to his son. The heir of a century of strife he saw that a large reserve was the best guarantee for peace, and while he built up the royal power at the expense of the people he gave them in return prosperity and progress. His critics have called him a tyrant and a miser, and he was not a very chivalrous or attractive character, but he was a statesman, a lawyer and an economist, an efficient patriot who benefited his house and his country, the saviour of society at the price of despotism.







HENRY VIII

IN 1544

From a picture after L. Hornebolt in the National Portrait Gallery

## HENRY VIII

1491-1547

HENRY VIII was born at Greenwich Palace on June 28th 1491, the second son of Henry VII by Elizabeth of York eldest daughter of Edward IV. At the age of three he was appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland and Earl Marshal and was created Duke of York, and in the following year he was elected a Knight of the Garter. The royal children were brought up at Greenwich and Eltham, and there Henry lived with his elder brother Arthur, his sisters Margaret and Mary and his nurse Ann Luke. He was put early to study, from a design of his father's to make him Archbishop of Canterbury, and he evinced remarkable docility for mathematics and theology. His tutors were Bernard André, the Poet Laureate, Gilles D'Ewes, Linacre and Skelton, whose coarse wit and easy virtue perhaps inspired his pupil's later tastes. In the year 1500 Erasmus describes going with Sir Thomas More to Eltham: "In the hall stood Prince Henry, now nine years old and having already something of royalty in his demeanour in which there was a certain dignity combined with singular courtesy. When we were at dinner the boy sent me a little note, to challenge something from my pen." \*

Henry became proficient in Latin, French, Italian and Spanish; but his greatest delight was in music, a taste inherited from his mother, and as a boy he used to sing in the choir of the chapel royal and keep his own minstrels. In 1501 at the marriage of his brother Arthur to Katherine of Aragon, Henry led the bride into church and after the banquet 'danced before the company in his jacket.' Within

\* Pollard, 22.

two years the deaths of his brother and mother made him heir to the throne and the Plantagenet line; he was then created Prince of Wales and contracted to his widowed sister-in-law whose dowry the King wished to keep. But the marriage hung fire; more advantageous offers were available, and Henry was still young. He soon emerged from the restraints of childhood, for he was exceptionally big and sturdy for his age, as devoted to sports as to learning, and he gradually became an expert at tilting, tennis, archery, riding and wrestling. When the Archduke Philip and his wife visited Windsor Henry received them some miles from the castle at the head of a train of five hundred persons. Just before he was eighteen, in April 1509, his father suddenly died, and Henry succeeded to the throne.

A genuinely British prince in birth, education and character Henry at his accession possessed just those qualities which his countrymen admire, good temper, muscular strength and unflinching courage. Fair haired and blue eyed, well made and distinguished, he was over six feet high and broad in proportion. In an age remarkable for feats of strength few could outdo him. He excelled in the tournament and was a match for the tallest archers of his guard: he was also a skilled musician, playing the lute, organ and harpsichord: an Italian a few years later describes "the enjoyment of hearing him play and sing, seeing him dance and run at the ring, in all which exercises he acquitted himself divinely." \*

Henry's first act as King was to marry his sister-in-law Katherine for whom he now asserted his love. She was some years his senior and with few personal attractions but she was witty, well educated and devoted to him. During the festivities his grandmother, the old Countess of Richmond died, and he was left entirely his own master, in a very different position to what his father had been. By many of his subjects Henry VII had never been considered the true King of England, for his mother represented the House of Lancaster and his wife that of York ;

\* Brewer, 1, 4, 5.

but after their deaths his son's claims were held to be valid. Henry VIII however was conscious of his dynastic weakness, and with only two sisters, one married to the King of Scots and the other still a child, he had fixed his hopes on a son, a boon for which he had to wait many years.

At first he devoted himself equally to business and pleasure. He kept on his father's ministers, Bishops Fox and Wareham, but in response to popular clamour he had the tax-gatherers Empson and Dudley executed; while his cousin Suffolk, who was still in the Tower, suffered the same fate. The conduct of affairs fell into the hands of Thomas Wolsey, a capable clerk whose talents had already recommended him to Henry's father. Of humble extraction and moderate learning he had wit and industry, and these gradually made him the King's companion, counsellor and confidant.

At Henry's accession England was at peace, the treasury was full, the people loyal, the baronage humble and the ministers adroit. With these advantages he had a legacy of foreign policy which he was prompt to pursue. The leading figures in Europe were his father-in-law, Ferdinand of Aragon, Julius II, the first of the Medici Popes, and the Emperor Maximilian, whose son Philip had married Queen Katherine's sister. They were all older and more experienced than Henry, but his intelligence and riches made him a factor not to be despised.

Henry had a hereditary antipathy for France which his father-in-law hastened to exploit. Katherine was the intermediary, Venice the excuse, and by 1511 Henry and Ferdinand were banded against Louis XII who was attacking the Pope. In that year Wolsey was called to the Council and mainly under his direction a French expedition was prepared. The first venture in Guienne was unfortunate; Ferdinand used it for his own designs on Navarre and England gained nothing. But Henry and Wolsey resolved to retrieve their reverse, the King from ambition, the minister for safety; so a fresh army and fleet were assembled. In his navy Henry took the keenest

interest, knowing his ships, their construction and their crews. It was he who altered their build, who first used cannon as broadsides and who founded the royal dockyards.

In June 1513 Henry sailed for Calais and on landing led his troops through heavy rains into French territory. "Comrades," he said, "now we have suffered at the beginning, fortune promises us better things." \* On August 13th at the Battle of the Spurs the English secured a bloodless victory with a number of prisoners. It was followed by the surrender of Terouanne and the capture of Tournay; and by October Henry was back in England a happy and successful hero. During his absence the King of Scots had been defeated and killed at Flodden Field. In the north peace was soon made, for Henry was not aggressive: "I content myself," he said, "with mine own." But in the negotiations with France he found himself deserted, first by Ferdinand and then by Maximilian, whose grandson Charles had promised to marry Henry's sister Mary, the most lovely creature of her day. The result was a rift with Spain and the Empire, and the marriage of Mary to Louis XII of France.† In a few months the latter died; and Mary then took as her husband Charles Brandon, created Duke of Suffolk. Meanwhile Wolsey, who had distinguished himself equally in the war and the peace, was successively made Bishop of Lincoln, Archbishop of York, Lord Chancellor and a Cardinal.

After his French campaign Henry reverted to pleasure. One writer calls him "a youngling who cares for nothing but for girls and hunting," while another says that "he rises at four or five and is out with his hawks and hounds until nine or ten at night; turning sport into a martyrdom, often tiring eight or nine horses."‡ Business he left in the main to Wolsey, but he kept up his interest in literature, theology and music, writing poetry, songs and polemical essays on doctrine. In 1514 he had an interview with

\* Pollard, 64.

† She was the only daughter of a King of England who ever married a King of France.

‡ Pollard, 121.

Colet the Dean of St. Paul's, a rich and independent reformer whose teaching Henry openly approved. "Let every man have his own doctor," he said, "this man is the doctor for me." He still delighted to play or dance before his court, and being proud of his own prowess he never failed to let foreigners see him at his best. Splendour appealed to him, and he was always devising or directing pageants, mummeries or banquets. The Queen bore him several children, but all except one daughter died as infants; and gradually Henry, strong, passionate and admired, formed other connections, first with Elizabeth Blount and then with Mary Boleyn. Yet despite her father's duplicities he kept on sufficiently good terms with his wife and caused little scandal.

In matters of state Wolsey became very powerful. Over the larger issues Henry exercised control, but he had not his father's devotion to despatches and dockets and was glad to devolve these duties on a deputy. Wolsey who worked like a slave and ruled like a master relied on Henry and not on Parliament; and as his prestige rose his popularity sank. He was an able statesman with a European reputation and his ambitions grew fast. Determined to exalt England and its ruler he meant to be Pope himself and to make Henry Emperor. But on these rocks he nearly foundered, for the foreign promises he had got came to nothing, and Henry found himself jockeyed again. The Continental powers however were more balanced than they had been, and the alliance of England was now eagerly sought: the Emperor even offered to resign his crown to Henry, but Henry had become sceptical.

In 1516 King Ferdinand died leaving his dominions to his grandson the Archduke Charles, who three years later inherited those of his father and was then elected Emperor. He thus became the most powerful prince in Europe, ruling Austria, the Netherlands, Naples and Spain. But despite the extent of his dominions France, in a more compact position, was still an enemy to be feared. Accordingly in 1520 both Charles V and Francis I made bids for Henry's friendship. Charles stayed with him for five days at

Canterbury; and Henry then crossed to Guisnes where at the Field of the Cloth of Gold French and English vied with each other in splendour and insincerity, for Henry's help was already promised to Charles.

Wolsey, anxious to divert his master's mind and knowing his bent and ability had encouraged him to write a book against the reforming doctrines of Luther. It appeared in 1521 under the name of *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum*, and the Pope rewarded its author with the title of Defender of the Faith. The study which it entailed turned Henry's thoughts into a fresh channel. There had always been a question about his marriage with his brother's wife; and he himself had had some scruples, though love, a papal bull, and the prospects of an heir had obscured them. The disagreements with his father-in-law had cooled his affections; Katherine was unlikely to have more children; and the idea of a woman reigning was new in England. Henry knew the danger of a disputed succession and gradually he became obsessed with the idea that he was being punished by Providence for the sin of his marriage. He was a stickler for orthodoxy, genuinely anxious for a son and a great admirer of women: the combination of circumstances had its effect. Its first sign was the execution on a plea of treason of the Duke of Buckingham, the first peer in the realm and the next Plantagenet heir. It struck the nobles with terror, for it showed Henry's imperious instincts; and from this time forward he began to change from reason and restraint to tyranny and licence.

One of the conditions of Henry's new alliance with the Emperor had been that Charles should marry the Princess Mary, Henry's only child. But after a desultory war of England and the Empire against Scotland and France, the defeat and capture of Francis at Pavia in 1525 gave Charles all he required. Though heavily in debt to Henry he withdrew from the marriage proposal as he had done before; and the rebuff made Henry less disinclined to divorce his wife who was Charles's aunt. A stronger reason was that he had fallen in love with Anne Boleyn, a maid

of honour to the Queen and sister of his former flame. Anne's father, Sir Thomas Boleyn, had been employed as ambassador by Henry; he was now raised to the peerage: her mother was a sister of the Duke of Norfolk who led the opposition to Wolsey. The Cardinal was against the divorce, so his enemies, who were tired of his arbitrary rule, now saw a chance of displacing him: but Wolsey was wise and made the King a present of Hampton Court.

Henry's new favourite had few personal attractions. "Madam Anne is not one of the handsomest women in the world" says the Venetian ambassador; "she is of middling stature, swarthy complexion, long neck, wide mouth, bosom not much raised, and in fact has nothing but the English King's great appetite and her eyes which are black and beautiful."\* But temperament and temptation were strong on both sides and she soon accepted Henry's offers. In 1528 he sends her *ma picture mise en braselettes* and writes to her "Wyshing myselfe (specially an evenynge) in my swet hart's harmys."† She travelled in his train, had her own rooms in the palace, and was created Marchioness of Pembroke; though at court she was commonly called 'the concubine.' For Wolsey she had little love. One evening at dinner she told Henry that the Cardinal deserved to lose his head: "Why then I perceive" quoth the King, "you are not the Cardinal's friend, but let me tell you I know all about that matter."‡ Anne however was determined to do better than her sister and she did not relax her efforts. She caught the plague and for a time lay seriously ill, but she recovered; and her lover, "who had been eating his meals alone in a tower," then took her off openly to Woodstock, the bower of royal paramours.

Henry had now reigned for twenty years and at home he had never been thwarted. For nearly all this time Wolsey had carried on the government with ability

\* Calendar of State Papers, Venice, ii. 365.

† Lettres de Henri VIII, 139, 140.

‡ Brewer, ii. 374.



and success. But his strength came from the strong will behind him. He had no party; the nobles loathed him; and Parliament at one of its rare meetings now refused him supplies. To Henry money was a necessity, for his father's savings had long been dissipated by a splendid court, subsidies to foreign states and expensive campaigns abroad. Wolsey, looking for revenue, resorted to forced loans; but the suggestion raised so much opposition that it had to be withdrawn, much to Henry's annoyance. The Cardinal's prestige in foreign affairs had diminished, for his policy of dynastic alliances had not gone much better than his schemes for the papal tiara or the imperial crown. These failures Henry might have condoned, but anything touching the succession or his own pleasure was another matter. He had determined to get rid of Katherine and to marry Anne; and though Wolsey's sense was all against the plan he saw that to maintain his place he must accept it. So the whole machinery of state was set at work, and the Pope was pressed to dissolve Henry's marriage. But at Rome the Emperor's influence was strong; and under his tutelage Clement VII refused to annul his predecessor's act. The best Wolsey could get was a trial before Cardinal Campeggio and himself, in which the King of England had to appear in his own capital as a suitor before the envoys of a foreign prince. Katherine appealed to Rome; and the resulting delay gave Wolsey's opponents their chance. Henry was ready to listen; and in October 1529 the Cardinal was relieved of the great seal, made to resign all his places except the archbishopric of York and, after being heavily fined on a plea of *premunire*, which meant obedience to the Pope, he was sent in disgrace to his see. Sir Thomas More succeeded him as Chancellor; while Norfolk, Suffolk and the Boleyns took over the government. They completed Wolsey's ruin. Within a year York House and his remaining property were seized, and he was arrested for treason; the blow was too great and in November 1530 he died.

Henry soon replaced Norfolk, who was an incapable

minister, by Thomas Cromwell, one of Wolsey's former agents. Cromwell was a subtle and dogged man and he produced a scheme to give effect to the royal wishes. His plan was to dispense altogether with the Pope's authority if he did not grant the King's demands. The opinions of various legal and learned corporations all over Europe were collected in support of Henry's claims; and some of the prelates accepted their view, as did Parliament "after being shown above an hundred books drawn by doctors of strange regions." But Cromwell was not satisfied with merely ignoring the Pope: he meant to attack him, and in 1531 he accused all the English clergy of *premunire*. This so terrified the bishops that Convocation offered the Crown large gifts to stay the proceedings. At Cromwell's advice Henry assented on condition that they recognised him as Supreme Head of the English Church. The divorce then moved more quickly, towing the Reformation in its train. Many of the bishops and nobles tried to resist, but the King's determination and his minister's methods carried the day. On the death of Archbishop Wareham Henry appointed Cranmer, a more pliable man, to his place. In January 1533 he secretly married Anne who was already pregnant: in April Convocation decided that unions with a sister-in-law were invalid; in May Cranmer dissolved Henry's marriage with Katherine and confirmed that with Anne; in June he crowned the new Queen; and in September she gave birth to Elizabeth, her only child. But what seemed her triumph in fact foreshadowed her fall. Her husband had hoped for a son; he only got a second daughter who in no way bettered his position; and from that moment Anne's influence declined.

Stimulated by Cromwell, Henry now marched rapidly along his national and reforming path. Blow after blow was struck at the decrepit mediæval Church. *Annates*, the immemorial tribute of the English clergy to the Pope, were discontinued: appeals to Rome were forbidden: the powers of Convocation and the ecclesiastical courts were strictly limited, and a wholesale dissolution of religious houses was begun. It yielded, under Cromwell's management, money

and lands which went to enrich the King and, by diminishing his dependence on Parliament, to increase his power.

Pope Clement threatened to excommunicate Henry, but Henry replied by a series of sentences against all who questioned his new spiritual rights. Sir Thomas More, an ex-Speaker and Chancellor, and Bishop Fisher, just made a Cardinal, were sent to the block. More abbeys were dissolved, and Cromwell's favour grew. He became the chief figure at court, for the new Queen's manners were arrogant and her family was disliked. In 1534 she had a miscarriage; and in that year Henry fell in love with Jane Seymour, a maid of honour of Anne's and the sister of one of his esquires.

In January 1536 Queen Katherine died, under some suspicion of poison. On the day of her funeral Anne had a still-born child, caused it was said by finding Jane Seymour seated on the King's knee. This determined her fate. Henry was tired of her—" *stufo et satio di questa nova regina*"—and he easily found an excuse. Early in May Anne was accused of incest with her brother Lord Rochford, largely on the relation of his own wife, and of adultery with other persons. On the 15th she was tried by a court of peers presided over by her uncle Norfolk, and four days later she was beheaded. There seems to have been little evidence and the tale sounds fantastic, yet twenty-six peers found her guilty.\* Within a fortnight Henry married Jane. The Act of Succession then pronounced Elizabeth and her sister Mary bastards, and gave Henry the power of disposing the Crown by will should his legitimate issue fail. One apparent object of this proviso was defeated almost at once by the death of the young Duke of Richmond, Henry's natural son by Elizabeth Blount, a youth so promising that many had thought he might be the future King.

In October 1537 Henry's hopes were at last fulfilled, for Queen Jane bore him a son. A few days later she died, and though she had little wit or looks she seems to have been the only wife for whom Henry mourned. But the

\* Froude questions her innocence, ii. 467 et seq.

birth of a son made the whole difference to him: his dynasty now seemed secure, and for two years he paused in his matrimonial career.

For the moment other cares engrossed him. In the north there had been a Catholic revolt against his new doctrines, the Pilgrimage of Grace, which he repressed severely with the sword. Cromwell having dissolved the lesser was now dealing with the greater abbeys and was promising the treasury more lands and wealth. On the Continent Francis I and Charles V had drawn together, while the Pope had signed a bull of excommunication against Henry. But Henry had no thought of yielding. He persecuted his unfortunate daughter Mary for adhering to her mother's faith. He prescribed rigidly the forms of worship to be used. A new Bible was issued, images were removed, and pilgrimages forbidden, though the Roman rule of faith was in practice preserved. To protect himself against treason he seized Lords Exeter and Montague, grandsons respectively of Edward IV and his brother the Duke of Clarence, and had them executed for corresponding with their cousin Cardinal Pole, who was his fiercest foe abroad.

Cromwell, anxious for a Protestant alliance against the Pope, soon persuaded Henry to choose a fourth wife, recommending Anne of Cleves, the daughter of a Lutheran prince. Her arrival was his ruin; for Henry, disappointed with her looks, called her 'a Flanders mare,' refused to put his neck under such a yoke, questioned her chastity in the grossest terms, and eventually got her to admit a pre-contract which released him at the price of a pension. With Cromwell he dealt more drastically. In the summer of 1540, directly the dissolution of the monasteries was complete, the minister, who had just been made Earl of Essex, Great Chamberlain of England and a Knight of the Garter, was arrested, attainted and beheaded. Neither his services, his position nor his appeals for mercy availed him. He fell at the King's word.

Henry was now nearly fifty and by no means so attractive as he had been, though he was still interested in

pleasure. To a gorgeous tournament which he gave in the Tilt Yard at Whitehall knights from all over Europe were bidden. But people were frightened of him. He had become ill tempered and immensely fat, and he suffered from an unpleasant ulcer in the leg. His reputation as a Bluebeard was known; and when offered his crown the Duchess of Milan said that she preferred her own head. Bent on more matrimony he now married Katherine Howard, another niece of Norfolk's. She was under eighteen, small and plain, and she had been brought up in poverty, but she was salacious and amusing. The union lasted for fifteen months and then, while Henry was ailing, she seems to have resumed her intimacy with a former lover. The matter came to Cranmer's knowledge and he told the King. Henry was terribly distressed "his heart was pierced and it was long before he could utter his sorrow with plenty of tears which were strange to his courage."\* But when he spoke it was to the point. The Queen with a number of her alleged accomplices was arrested. She confessed to pre-nuptial immorality though she maintained her subsequent innocence. The list of those implicated became longer every day and the greatest scandal ensued. The Duchess of Norfolk was imprisoned; various minor offenders were executed, Anne Boleyn's accuser, Lady Rochfort, among them; and finally in 1542 the Queen herself was brought to the block, though her guilt as regards adultery seems to have been as uncertain as that of her cousin Anne.†

A year later Henry, still undismayed, married Katherine Parr, widow of Lord Latimer, a lady of over thirty who had already had two husbands and was to have a fourth. She was of little height, appearance or distinction, but she had a fortune, a character and tact, and for the remainder of Henry's life she restrained, to some extent, his temper and supervised his health. Neither was an easy task, and at times she sailed perilously near the wind. Once she was bold enough to engage Henry in a theological dispute. He instantly ordered her arrest,

\* Herbert, 536.

† But see Froude, iv. 126 et seq.

saying 'it was a thing much to his comfort in his old age to be taught by his wife.' The Queen however explained that she had only spoken 'to minister talk' and that it would be unbecoming in her to assert opinions contrary to those of her lord. "Is that so, sweetheart," said Henry, "then we are perfect friends"; and when the Chancellor came to attach her person he was abused as a 'knave, beast and fool.'\*

Henry was now acting as his own minister, with Cranmer and Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, as his principal advisers. Hertford, a brother of Queen Jane's, was a good soldier. In two successful campaigns in Scotland and France he had sacked Edinburgh and held Boulogne; while Henry had shewn something of his old spirit in raising troops and coining his plate. He had just taken the title of King of Ireland, and was working with Parliament better than before, telling them what to do and keeping in touch with the people. In 1545 the surrender of two thousand chantries and chapels again added to his revenue, which rose to over two million ducats; with some of the proceeds six new bishoprics were founded. He still continued his religious reforms. The English Bible, the Litany and the King's Book or Necessary Doctrine for any Christian Man, were all steps towards Protestantism, and they were supported by the Queen, Hertford and many of the bishops. But persecution flourished; "the King sending the heretic who denied the real presence and the traitor who denied his supremacy to death on the same hurdle."

Henry's health however was a constant worry. "The inflammation of his leg gave him a burning fever and gradually decayed his spirit" and he suffered such pain that he became at times speechless and black in the face. He had grown very grey, and though he still ate enormously he had lost his old agility. By the autumn of 1546 he was so crippled with gout that he could not sign his name and so unwieldy that he could neither walk nor stand. In January 1547 he came up to Westminster. It was clear

\* Pollard, 466.

that he could not last long, so the Catholic reactionaries led by Norfolk and his son Surrey determined to make a final bid for power. Hertford and the Queen withstood them; they failed and were sent to the Tower. There on January 20th Surrey was beheaded; and four days later a bill of attainder passed against his father, which Henry was unable to sign. His illness had recently increased, but no one dared tell him of his condition, for it was high treason to mention the King's death. At last Anthony Denny, his groom of the bedchamber, hinted it. Henry was little moved and when asked if any learned man should be sent for said that he would take a little sleep "and then as I feel myself I will advise upon the matter." \* At midnight Cranmer came; but by then Henry was speechless. He wrung the archbishop's hand to show his faith and early on January 28th 1547 he died, firm and obdurate to the end. He was fifty-five and had reigned nearly thirty-eight years. In his will were detailed directions for his burial, which took place in St. George's Chapel at Windsor, by the side of Queen Jane.† He left three children, Edward, Mary and Elizabeth, who each in turn succeeded to the throne. Of his six wives four had predeceased him, two at his own command: Anne of Cleves and Katherine Parr survived, the one for ten years, the other for a few months.

Holbein and other artists have immortalised Henry VIII's form and features. Handsome as a young man, in later life he became coarse and bloated, though he retained his mental powers. For a generation he had been the foremost figure in Europe, a Europe that comprised Julius II and Clement VII, Luther and Erasmus, Charles V and Francis I, Wolsey and Cromwell, Melancthon and More. "The first King of England who was styled Majesty so masterful was he that he could not bear for any man to look at him." ‡ This pride dated from his youth. At the beginning of his reign when an envoy

\* Pollard, 424.

† The black marble sarcophagus meant for him was used 260 years later for Lord Nelson.

‡ Seward, 155.

from France announced his sovereign's agreement to "the English proposals of amity" Henry turned to his attendants and said, "Who wrote this letter? I ask peace of the King of France, who dares not look me in the face, still less make war on me." \*

His generosity was no less famous. After the capture of Terouanne he made the most distinguished French prisoners dine with him, and if any ransom seemed too high he said "I will pay the rest." † At the Field of the Cloth of Gold his magnificence and grandeur astonished everyone. The housings on his chargers were valued at 15,000 crowns, while his clothes, jewels and table beggared description. His belt and doublet glittered with "a treasure of rubies and diamonds" and on his pavilion, which covered four acres, "nothing was visible but gold and silver." ‡ But he had also an inherited acquisitiveness. When he exchanged presents with Francis I he secured a Mantuan charger called Dappled Duke which was worth all the other horses there, and from Wolsey he took Hampton Court and Whitehall, his tomb at Windsor, and much of the credit of founding Christ Church and Greenwich. His own palace at Nonesuch he never finished.

In his earlier years he was full of merriment and courtesy, "singing, dancing, and playing on the flute, lute and cornet" for the entertainment of his guests. In 1531 an Italian writes of him "He embraced me joyously; he is beyond measure affable." § At this time Henry was perhaps at his best, for without losing his youth he had acquired dignity and repose. "His face," says the Venetian ambassador, "is angelic, his head imperial (*cesarina*) and bald: he wears a beard contrary to English custom. He sits and manages a horse well, jousts, throws the quoit, draws the bow, and plays at tennis dexterously."

In business Henry was efficient, though not as careful or industrious as his father. His administration was sounder in principle than in execution: in Wales his policy succeeded but in Scotland and Ireland it failed. "Although

\* C. S. P., Ven., ii. 5.

† *Ibid.*, ii. 63.

‡ *Ibid.*, ii. 118.

§ *Ibid.*, ii. 287.



always intelligent and judicious he allowed himself to be so allured by pleasures that for many years he left the government to his ministers, wellnigh until the persecution of Cardinal Wolsey : but from that time he took such delight in his own rule that from liberal he became avaricious." \* He delighted in interviews, and in debate, logic and diplomacy he was naturally skilful. His book against Luther and his Necessary Doctrine were in the main his own composition. In matters of faith he was a law to himself, though devout in his observances : his children were brought up strictly, and the atmosphere of his court was severe. To his materialistic mind it was largely due that the English Reformation came without revolution.

His morals have been widely decried, and his matrimonial record is bad, but he was not the lecher that history often suggests : he was the first King to abolish the London stews, and Puttenham mentions his angry objection to an obscene rhyme.† He believed it necessary to the State that he should have an heir and he considered that his marriages should be treated as sacred. In his youth he had few gallantries. The first Katherine was his real wife : the first Anne and the second Katherine were little more than mistresses : Jane was the mother of his son : the second Anne was nothing, and the third Katherine was his companion and nurse. Only two of these were Catholics, the remainder being all in sympathy with the reformed faith.

Henry's passion for Anne was the turning point in his career. Before that event he had been ready to let others do the work of state ; but by 1527 money was giving out and Parliament was growing restless. Tired of his earlier amusements, though still full of energy, a new love with hopes of a son enthralled him ; and henceforward the divorce of Katherine became the keynote of his policy. By sheer force of will he defeated his opponents at home and abroad ; and the taste for power once whetted never afterwards left him. Wolsey fell for not displacing one Queen, Cromwell for producing another. Peers and pre-

\* C. S. P., Ven., ii. 293.

† Seward, i. 52.

lates were sent to the block. The Church's lands were seized, its language, doctrines and ceremonies changed, while the crown itself was made Henry's chattel to devise. As he grew older every institution bowed before him ; yet in his own mind he was merely the father of his country, laying down for his subjects their rule of life. Not by nature bloodthirsty, humanity did not enter into his thoughts.

A prince so talented and dominating could do much. He made the sovereigns of England almost absolute for a century and permanently altered its form of worship. At home he had found the formidable engine of the royal authority ready to his hand and he so developed it that eventually he controlled the whole machinery of government, while abroad "he strove to make himself Arbiter of Christendom.\*" But though a despot in theory and practice he was a thoroughly national King.

Henry VIII bulks large in history ; he was a big, capable and determined man who left his mark upon it. He brushed aside Popes and Parliaments or sent Queens and Cardinals to their death much as he published the Great Bible or built the Great Harry. Wolsey who knew him best said that "rather than miss or want any part of his appetite he would hazard the loss of half his kingdom," and this forceful greed whether for money, women or power was Henry's ruling trait. Yet in his dearest wish he was defeated. He had no descendants in the second generation ; within a space equal to his own lifetime his dynasty had ceased, and a century after his death his successors had lost nearly all the supremacy which he had so strenuously secured.

\* Herbert, 634.

## EDWARD VI

1537-1553

EDWARD VI was born at Hampton Court on October 12th 1537, the only child of Henry VIII by his third wife Jane daughter of Sir John Seymour, a Wiltshire knight. Three days later he was christened, his sponsors being his half-sister the Lady Mary, Archbishop Cranmer and the Duke of Norfolk. On October 24th his mother died from a chill; and a wet-nurse, Mother Jak, was then found for him.

To have a son had been the wish of Henry's life, and to some extent it consoled him for the loss of his wife. A household was at once set up for the Prince with an almoner, dean, mistress, chamberlains and rockers; and rooms were assigned him at Hampton Court, Havering-atte-Bower and Windsor. His two half-sisters, the daughters respectively of Queens Katherine and Anne, had already been declared illegitimate by Act of Parliament, and in comparison with their brother they now sank into insignificance.

In 1543 peace was made with the Scots, one of the conditions being that Edward should marry their young Queen, then only a few months old. His women attendants were then exchanged for men, and he was given tutors, Dr. Cox, Sir John Cheke, Sir Anthony Cooke, Roger Ascham for writing, Bellmaine for French, van Wilder and Sternhold for music. Even at this early age Edward was a keen, industrious student. He used to "sequester himself in some chamber or gallery to learn his books"; but his weak constitution made him less active in sport or games. His education gradually became so intensive that the finer points of theology were among his



EDWARD VI

From a picture after H. Holbein in the National Portrait Gallery



favourite studies, and a foreigner describes him as a "boy prodigy who had already learnt seven languages." His companions were his cousins, the Greys, Seymours and Staffords, with Lord Surrey and the Dudleys, but his chief friend was an Irish boy named Barnaby Fitzpatrick, son of the Lord of Upper Ossory. Of his sister Mary he saw little; she was twenty years his senior and in a state of semi-disgrace because of her adherence to the Catholic religion. Elizabeth was nearer his own age: for her he had some affection and he used to call her "his sister Temperance."

In 1546 preparations were made to create Edward Prince of Wales, but they were delayed by the state of the King's health, while the Council was concerned with more serious matters. Two parties divided it, the Reformers and the Romanists. The former were led by Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, Edward's maternal uncle, who had been raised to an earldom at his nephew's birth. A friend of the King's and a sound soldier he was honest and able, though ambitious and somewhat bigoted. Among his supporters were his brother Thomas, a man less capable and discreet, Archbishop Cranmer, Paget, the Secretary of State, and Dudley, Lord Lisle, a son of Henry VII's tax gatherer. Strong adherents of the new faith they were all determined that their opponents should not return to power. The Catholic party comprised most of the old nobility. They were led by the Duke of Norfolk and Bishop Gardiner of Winchester; but though rich and numerous they were suspect and generally out of favour. Hertford however was anxious for the future and in December 1546 he persuaded Henry to approve a will regulating the succession and naming a Council of Regency. Norfolk and his son Surrey were then imprisoned, and a few days later the latter was executed.

On January 28th 1547 Henry VIII died. Edward who was staying at Hatfield with his sister Elizabeth was at once brought up to the Tower by Hertford, "Sir Anthonie Brown, the Master of the Horse, riding after him." The names of the Council of Regency were disclosed, and they

chose Hertford to be Lord Protector. He was then created Duke of Somerset and appointed Lord Treasurer and Earl Marshal; while his brother Thomas was made a peer and High Admiral. Places were given to some of the other members, Dudley becoming Earl of Warwick and Lord Great Chamberlain and Paget a Knight of the Garter.

The coronation took place on February 20th, and almost at once rivalries began. Thomas Seymour had persuaded Queen Katherine, Henry's widow, to marry him, with which the Protector and his wife were offended. Somerset had gone to Scotland to enforce an agreement about Edward's marriage, and during his absence his brother tried to supplant him with the King who had however little affection for either of his uncles.

Though only ten years old Edward was deeply interested in religion. The principal reformers, Ridley, Latimer, Hooper and Knox used to preach before him; and he followed their arguments and approved their opinions with acumen. Knox speaks of his 'godly disposition, virtue and God's truth,' while another writer says that "no study delights him more than that of the Holy Scriptures, of which he reads daily ten chapters with the greatest attention." \* These tendencies were encouraged by Somerset, and numbers of foreign Protestants soon flocked to England. But though the Protector's proselytising pleased some his civil government was unpopular, and on his return from Scotland he found many of the Council against him. He did not hesitate to accuse his brother of treason; and early in 1549 the High Admiral was attainted and beheaded, Edward, who already kept a diary, noting it without comment.

His brother's execution increased the feeling against the Protector, while his affectation of regal state and his absolute rule angered his colleagues. Led by Warwick they induced Edward to accept their views. In October the duke was sent to the Tower, deprived of his offices and heavily fined; while Warwick for the time took his place. Somerset however made his sub-

\* D. N. B., vi. 504.

mission and after a few months he was released. His daughter was then married to Warwick's eldest son, and he gradually began to resume his position. But Warwick had tasted the sweets of power and had been able to confirm his hold upon Edward. He had himself made Duke of Northumberland and attacked his rival again. In 1551 Somerset was committed to the Tower for the second time and early in the following year he also was executed, with Edward's cold approval.

The young King was working at full pressure, his mind and body on a constant strain. Much state was kept about him but he had little liberty. Not even with his sisters was he intimate: at meals if he spoke to them "they must rise and kneel until he has finished talking." \* Barnaby Fitzpatrick had been sent off to France to complete his education, and Edward was thus almost isolated.

In April 1552 he had smallpox and on his recovery he went on a progress through the south of England, visiting various noblemen's houses and enjoying himself "in killing of wild bestes, in pleasant journeys, in good viewing of fair counties. At Cowdray," he says, "we were marvelously, yea rather excessively, banquetted." † During the summer Cheke, his tutor, fell ill, and Edward then gave some attention to sport; but in January 1553 he caught a chill from drinking when hot after tennis, and his lungs soon became so seriously affected that it was believed he would die. He suffered from a racking cough and had to retire altogether from public view, remaining at Greenwich Palace and rarely appearing at court. Northumberland, who now held complete control of the government, had determined to make his own position permanent by securing the crown for Lady Jane Grey, who was Edward's first cousin ‡ and whom he had married to his son Guildford Dudley. In June he induced Edward to sign a document giving this effect. Edward had a real affection for Jane who shared his religious views and classical studies, while he

\* Thornton Cook, 193. † *Literary Remains of Edward VI*, i. 180.

‡ She was a granddaughter of Henry VIII's sister Mary.



was nervous at the idea of his sister Mary's succession as she was so strong a Catholic. It was now clear that the King had consumption and could survive only a short time. He lay in his bed repeating prayers and would say to his attendants "I thought ye had been further off, adding smilingly 'I was praying to God.'" On July 6th 1553 he died, his last words being "I am faint; Lord have mercy upon me and take my spirit." \* He was nearly sixteen and had reigned a little under six years. He was buried in Henry VII's chapel in Westminster Abbey.

Edward VI was fair, with grey eyes, below the average height, of a weak constitution (*di complessione molto debile*), very quiet and sedate. His feeble health and short sight kept him from much outdoor exercise, though he rode, shot at the ring and played tennis. His chief pleasure was literary work, and whether he was writing in foreign languages, reading the fathers, cataloguing the minutes of his Council or arranging state functions, he never wasted time. Cardan says that at the age of fifteen he was perfect in English, French and Latin, speaking the latter "with as much readiness and elegance as myself. He was a pretty good logician, understood natural philosophy and music and played upon the lute. The highest expectations had been formed of him from the sweetness of his disposition and the excellence of his talents." †

He had a distinct idea of the dignity and duties of his position: he once told Sir Thomas Gresham that "he should know he served a King." But save Fitzpatrick, his sister Elizabeth and his cousin Jane Grey he had few friends, for he never cared either for Somerset or Northumberland. Brought up without any woman's influence, with an ailing father and ambitious uncles, he had little experience of family life, nor did anyone properly consider his health or moderate his education. Cheke used to say that his endeavour was "to give him no precept unaccompanied by some example," ‡ but though in

\* Lit. Rem. Edw. VI, i. cxxix.

† Seward, i. 109.

‡ Lit. Rem., Edw. VI, i. cl.

scholarship Edward profited he appears to have acquired little humanity. For Fitzpatrick alone he shewed affection. "I am the gladder the oftener I here from you" he writes "wishing you as much good as ourself."\* Of Cheke when he lay ill Edward said "He will recover, for I have prayed for him."

Conscientious and staid, advanced beyond his years, driven on by a sense of duty Edward VI was typical of the Puritan element in the Reformation. His diary suggests some signs of feeling for his subjects, but in the main he seems to have inherited his father's Olympian outlook. The adoption of the English Prayer Book and the inception of elementary education both took place in his reign and they were not a little due to his own devotion to religion and letters; but his youth, his reserve and the circumstances of his time make it difficult to attempt any useful estimate of his character.

\* Lit. Rem., Edw. VI, i. 75.

## MARY I

1516-1558

MARY TUDOR, styled Bloody Mary, was born at Greenwich Palace on February 18th 1516, the third but only surviving child of Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon. Her godfather was Cardinal Wolsey, her godmothers the Duchess of Norfolk and Lady Katherine Plantagenet, while the Countess of Salisbury, another Plantagenet, was her governess. Her first establishment was at Ditton Park in Buckinghamshire, and she lived afterwards at Ludlow or Ampthill. Even as a child she was advanced for her age: the Venetian ambassador tells a tale of her being carried into the presence chamber by her father and turning away from all the courtiers to a friar, calling "Priest, priest."

By the time she was four she played on the virginals and before she was nine she could make short speeches in Latin. Linacre, Vives and Fetherston were her tutors, while van Wilder and Paston taught her music. She learnt to talk French, Spanish and Italian with ease and to perform well on several instruments, but her real pleasure was in dress and embroidery at which she became an expert. Her education was not romantic, for her Spanish tutor forbade all those tales of chivalry which Cervantes made the curate burn. Tougher fare was provided for her: Jerome and Augustine, Plato and Seneca, with More and Erasmus for light reading.

Mary's childhood was the period of Wolsey's dynastic policy, and she was his principal pawn. Marriages for her were mooted with the King of France or his son, with the Emperor Charles V, with Lord Surrey and even



MARY I  
IN 1544

From the picture by J. Corvus in the National Portrait Gallery



with her half-brother the Duke of Richmond: but none materialised, and in 1527 the prospect of her mother's divorce so damaged her position that for twenty-six years she led a chequered career. Lady Salisbury remained with her; and she saw a good deal of the latter's son, Reginald Pole, for whom it was said she had an affection. Her physical development was slow, and when she was sixteen the French ambassador describes her as "so thin, sparse and small as to be unfit for marriage for three years." \*

In 1533 Henry's union with Anne Boleyn further darkened Mary's prospects; and after the birth of Elizabeth in September of that year an Act was passed which declared her illegitimate and incapable of inheriting the crown. The new Queen was specially active in persecuting her. Mary was ordered to renounce the name of princess, her household was disbanded and she was sent to Hatfield with Lady Shelton, Anne's aunt, who was directed to beat her if disobedient. But though only a girl she shewed her Tudor spirit. She writes to the Privy Council "My lords, As touching my removal to Hatfield, I will obey his Grace, as my duty is, or to any other place his Grace may appoint me: but I protest before you and all others present that my conscience will in no wise suffer me to take any other than myself for princess, or for the King's daughter born in lawful matrimony, and that I will never wittingly or willingly say or do ought whereby any person might take occasion to think that I agree to the contrary. Nor say I this out of any ambition or proud mind, as God is my judge. If I shall do otherwise I should slander the deed of our Mother, the Holy Church, and the Pope, who is the judge in this matter, and none other, and should also dishonour the King my father, the Queen my mother, and falsely confess myself a bastard, which God defend I should do, since the Pope hath not so declared it by his sentence definitive, to whose final judgment I submit myself." To Henry she wrote no less bravely: "In most humble wise I beseech your Grace of daily

\* D. N. B., xii. 1220.

blessing. Pleaseth the same to be advertised that this morning my chamberlain came and showed me that he had received a letter from Sir William Parker, the comptroller of your household, that I should with all diligence remove to the castle of Hertford. Whereupon I desired to see that letter, which he showed me, wherein was written that 'the Lady Mary, the King's daughter should remove to the place aforesaid,' leaving out in the same the name of princess. Which when I heard I could not a little marvel, trusting that verily your Grace was not privy to the letter, forasmuch as I doubt not that your Grace doth take me for your true daughter born in lawful matrimony."

During these years Mary showed real courage. Refusing to resign her rank or reform her religion she stuck firmly to her mother and behaved with equal patience and dignity. Her conduct had its effect, and she acquired a considerable following in the country; while the Imperial ambassador supported her with all his influence. Severe measures were employed against her. Her friends were kept away, her correspondence was searched and it was commonly believed that attempts were made to poison her. She fell seriously ill; and though Henry sent her his own physician he openly wished for her death, calling her "his worst enemy." But this treatment only increased public sympathy for her, and on her journeys she was openly cheered as the heir to the throne.

In January 1536 her troubles reached their climax, for her mother died, and Mary was not allowed to go to her despite the intensity of her grief, a last cruelty which did much to embitter her character permanently. But matters then improved. Anne was already losing her power and four months later she lost her life. The next Queen, Jane Seymour, was better disposed to Mary and advised her to secure the King's forgiveness. Chapuys, the Emperor's envoy, who saw that Elizabeth would now be declared illegitimate and that Mary's position would benefit thereby, also counselled a compromise. After much persuasion and after being told by Norfolk that her head

ought to be knocked against a wall and by Cromwell that she was the most obstinate and obdurate woman in the world, Mary at last consented to acknowledge her mother's divorce and to take the oath of supremacy. The effect was immediate, and by 1537 she was back in Henry's good graces. She had just come of age; she was still short, pale and thin, but sedate, intelligent and popular with the people at large.

The birth of her half-brother Edward, to whom she stood sponsor, and the death of Queen Jane brought Mary closer to her father; and she was gradually recovering her position when a Catholic rising again damaged it. Her old governess Lady Salisbury and her cousin Lord Exeter were sent to the Tower and with Fetherston, her former tutor, were soon afterwards executed; while Mary herself was confined in Hertford Castle and kept very short of money. Fresh attempts were made by Cromwell and the King to find her a husband, but there were disputes about her dowry. The Catholic princes demurred to her birth, and she herself refused to marry a Protestant "desiring rather to continue still a maid." With Queen Katherine Parr she made friends; and the Emperor Charles at last induced Henry to reinstate her in the succession, though after any other of his children born in wedlock.

While still a fervent Catholic Mary was now less bellicose than she had been. She devoted herself to religion and in 1544 she made a translation of Erasmus' paraphrase of the Gospel of St. John which was subsequently published. Henry continued to hawk her hand about Europe; but nothing came of his offers; and when in 1547 he died he begged her to protect her young brother and left her £3,000 a year and £10,000, with plate and jewellery, on her marriage.

At the beginning of Edward's reign Mary conducted herself with circumspection, keeping on friendly terms with her brother and the Seymours. Edward even suggested that the admiral should marry her "to turn her opinions." But their encouragement of the Protestants caused her



anxiety, and in 1549 she broke with the Council on the prohibition of the mass. She then fell ill from a trouble in the womb which was to disable her permanently in the future—to Elizabeth she calls it “her old guest which comes with the fall of the leaf.”

She continued to refuse any compromise on religion until Edward sent for her: “The lady Mary my sister came to me at Westminster wheare after salutacions she was called with my counsel into a chambre, where it was declared how long I had suffered her masse *against my will* \* in hope of her reconciliation, and how now, except I saw some short amendment, I could not beare it. She answered that her soul was God’s, and her faith; she would not change nor dissemble her opnion with contrary doings.” † Mary speaking of this interview said that “her good sweet brother was not responsible for her persecution.” The fall of Somerset for a time lessened the pressure on her, but Northumberland, unable to enlist her political support, reverted to similar measures. The Emperor’s envoy however again stood her friend, and his influence was sufficient to ensure her some latitude in her own household. He even contrived a scheme to carry her off to Brussels, but it was prevented by the Council.

Mary was visited at Hunsdon by Bishop Ridley. She entertained him courteously, but when he desired to preach before her she replied that the parish church was open to him but that she and her household would not be present. Ridley said that “he hoped that she would not refuse to hear God’s word”: to which Mary replied that “she did not know what they called God’s word now, but that she was sure that it was not the same as in her father’s time.” ‡ On several occasions she came up to London to see her brother for whom she was full of affection despite their differences of opinion. She writes to him in May 1553, “My duty most humbly presented to your Highness it may please the same to be advertised that my hearing of your Highness’ late rheum and cough

\* These words are struck through with the King’s pen.

† Lit. Rem. Edw. VI, 308.

‡ Strickland, in. 422.

was as much grief as ever was any worldly thing." \* On these journeys the Londoners always greeted her warmly, for they regarded her as their future Queen.

Northumberland had determined to place his own family in power, and during Edward's illness he played upon his fears of a Catholic reign and eventually persuaded him to sign the Devises of the Succession, by which six nearer heirs to the throne were passed over in favour of Lady Jane Grey who had married Northumberland's son Guildford Dudley. A great-granddaughter of Henry VII through her mother the Duchess of Suffolk, Jane was, like Edward, a Protestant. Some of the Council and several judges were induced to concur in this scheme; and when on July 6th 1553 Edward died, Jane was secretly proclaimed Queen. Mary was at Hunsdon; and for three days Northumberland kept the news quiet hoping to get hold of her. He sent a messenger asking her to come and visit her brother; but on the road Mary was met by her goldsmith who told her the truth. She at once turned aside to Cambridge, but finding the citizens there strong Protestants she rode off in disguise to Kenninghall escorted by two Catholic squires.

Hearing that Jane had been publicly proclaimed in London, Mary fled to Framlingham Castle which was in a good state of defence. From there she wrote peremptorily to the Council setting forth her rights and directing them to desist from their treason. She was soon joined by numbers of Suffolk gentlemen, and her following rapidly rose to over 12,000 men. By this time Edward's death was known all over the country, and everywhere the feeling rose in Mary's favour.

Northumberland had set out to enlist the midlands; but his adherents now began to desert and several of the lords left him. He tried to temporise, but it was too late, and on July 19th he was captured at Cambridge. On the same day Mary was proclaimed Queen, and by the end of the month her position was secure. Disbanding her troops she rode in state to London, arriving at the

\* Strickland, iii. 422.

Tower on August 3rd. There she found assembled on the green the Catholic prisoners of the late reign, among them the old Duke of Norfolk, Bishop Gardiner of Winchester and her cousin Lord Courtenay, all of whom she ordered to be released. Three weeks later Northumberland was executed, while Guildford Dudley, Jane, and her father, the Duke of Suffolk, were imprisoned. The rebellion had been scotched with hardly any bloodshed.

On September 30th Mary proceeded to Westminster 'in a chariot of cloth of gold wearing a gown of purple velvet trimmed with ermine, her crown so heavy with jewels that she was faine to beare up her head with her hand.'\* Next day she was crowned, the ceremony being performed by Bishop Gardiner as both the primates were under arrest. Her sister Elizabeth and Queen Anne of Cleves supported her in the Abbey and at the subsequent banquet.

The first Queen Regnant of England Mary was determined to show herself worthy of her place and her descent. She was strict and honest: she worked at business all day and half the night: she was affable and easy of access. Gardiner she made Chancellor but she kept on Lord Winchester, a moderate man, as Treasurer. Both advised her to adopt a policy of compromise in religion; but Mary, as a fervent Catholic, was set on restoring England to its old belief. Renard the Emperor's ambassador became her chief confidant, and she asked for a Papal Legate to be sent her. For this office Cardinal Pole was chosen: he was an Englishman, Mary's cousin and former friend, and it was even suggested that he should marry her; but to this he demurred from his infirmity and age. Her ministers were urgent that she should select a husband, and Parliament addressed her praying that she would choose an Englishman. There was however no eligible nobleman of her own faith; for Courtenay was a profligate, while Mary looked for an equal in rank and religious ardour. She asked the advice of her cousin the Emperor, who had often helped her and had once been himself

\* Holinshed, iv. 8.

a suitor for her hand. Without hesitation he proposed his son the Archduke Philip. Like Mary, Philip was half a Spaniard and an active Romanist; he was also the premier prince in Europe, but he was eleven years her junior, and his pride was not likely to make him popular in England. Pole, Gardiner and most of the Council were against the alliance; but Renard, Norfolk and some of the Catholics favoured it; while Mary herself believed that it would strengthen her against the Queen of Scots who, as the eldest legitimate descendant of Henry VII, claimed to be heir to the English throne.

In January 1554 Mary's intention to marry Philip was publicly announced. It was widely resented in the country. The Spanish envoys were maltreated on their passage from Dover to London, and risings took place in several counties. The most serious was led by Sir Thomas Wyatt, who marched from Kent to Southwark and brought a force along Knightsbridge and the Strand before he was taken at Ludgate Hill. In this crisis Mary showed complete calm and courage. Refusing to take refuge in the Tower she remained at St. James's Palace and offered to go into the battle herself. "All that dare not fight" she said "may fall to prayers." \* The revolt collapsed, but its result was to harden Mary's heart both about her marriage and the Reformers. All who were suspected of being concerned in the conspiracy were quickly dealt with; and Wyatt, Suffolk, Lady Jane Grey, her husband and some sixty others were executed. The enemies of Elizabeth did their best to involve her also, as a Protestant; and at Renard's advice she was sent to the Tower; but Gardiner's wiser counsels prevailed, and two months later she was released.

Mary now proceeded formally to restore the Roman religion. Although the Church lands were not given back, all deprived bishops and abbots were reinstated, married clergy were expelled, the mass was reintroduced and altars were again set up. Gardiner persuaded Parliament to agree to the Spanish marriage, and in July 1554

\* Strickland, iii. 489.

Philip landed at Southampton "in a wild wind and downpouring rain." A few days later his wedding with Mary was celebrated in Winchester Cathedral, the ceremony being conducted in Latin and English. 'The Queen wore gold brocade, her sleeves set with pearls and diamonds, her shoes red.' She spoke to the Spanish grandees in their own language, a compliment which her husband was unable to reciprocate to the English. To raise him to his wife's rank he had been given the kingdom of Naples by his father; and the combined titles of the pair were King and Queen of England, France, Naples, Jerusalem and Ireland.

Philip and Mary established themselves at Hampton Court. Though they were less accessible than English sovereigns had usually been there was no stint in entertainment. A fast-day dinner included salt salmon, porpus, fresh sturgeon, roast eels, perches, boiled grabes, buttered eggs, apples and oatmeal, with twelve gallons of cream, followed by cheese, peas, damsons, wafers, filberts and ipocras (six gallons).<sup>\*</sup> But Philip, despite the gold he lavished, was disliked because of the state he affected and the attentions he offered to the English ladies, while his interference in the government was even more resented. At first some show of content was maintained. Elizabeth was reconciled to her sister, her protestations that she was a true subject being received by the Queen with the remark "*Dios sabe!* whether you be innocent or guilty I forgive you."

On November 27th 1554 Cardinal Pole publicly "absolved the realm," and on the same day the Queen's pregnancy was announced. Her marriage had greatly changed Mary. Hitherto she had been English in her policy and willing to admit some slight toleration in matters of faith. But now her attitude altered. Acts were passed confirming the papal pretensions and reviving the laws against heresy. Four ecclesiastics, including a bishop, were burnt, despite the protests of Gardiner and of several Spaniards; and a definite persecu-

<sup>\*</sup> Strickland, iii. 528.

tion of Protestants began. By May 1555 it was apparent that Mary's expectations of a child were vain: she was indeed already in a decline. The Venetian ambassador describes her as a prey to the severest headaches and to perpetual attacks of hysteria, and she was always in pain. "She sat whole days on the ground crouched together, her knees above her head." \* Philip began to neglect her and in the summer he went off to visit his other dominions; while Mary, bitterly disillusioned, consoled herself by proselytising; though Parliament would only restore the crown lands to the Pope, leaving those of the nobles untouched. But Gardiner's death and Philip's absence left her free; and by the end of the year ninety heretics had been burned. Tremendous feeling was roused by these sentences, and all over the country a definite opposition began against foreign rule and foreign religion.

Mary was now forty. Her chronic indisposition had become a disease, and to her intimates it was clear that she would never have any children. The position of Elizabeth benefited accordingly. She was the undoubted heir, she was unmarried and she was believed to be a Protestant. Although she lived in retirement at Hatfield a number of influential people led by William Cecil, a former Secretary of State, frequented her company. A conspiracy was formed to place her on the throne, but her connection with it could not be proved; and Mary, ailing and depressed, was willing again to believe in her innocence. The persecution however went on. Two of the principal Protestant bishops, Ridley and Latimer, were burnt; and at last Cranmer, the Primate, who had pronounced the divorce of Mary's mother, followed them. The loyalty of thousands of Catholic Englishmen was permanently alienated, until Philip himself counselled moderation. But Mary was adamant, and when Philip urged her to betroth Elizabeth to the Prince of Savoy and send her out of the country she refused point blank.

The direction of the government was left to Heath, the Chancellor, and Pole, the new Archbishop of Canterbury.

\* Strickland, iii. 548.

In business Mary had become less active, for she was always ill and was conscious of her unpopularity. Yet despite the discontent of her ministers and her people she stuck to her policy, and while her lieges were roasting at Smithfield she prayed at Greenwich or Hampton Court, stirred up the bishops, worked at her embroidery and waited for her husband.

At last in March 1557 Philip returned for three months to England. During his visit he persuaded Mary to declare war on France, strongly against the wish of her Council. In August the battle of St. Quentin was won by the English; but during the autumn the Scots came to the assistance of the French, and in the following January Calais, the last English possession on the Continent, was taken by the Duc de Guise. The news threw Mary into a deep despair, and even a packed Parliament voiced the national dismay.

In April the unfortunate Queen again made sure that she was pregnant, though it was over nine months since she had seen her husband. She spent the summer at Richmond and St. James's and was much upset at hearing of the death of her cousin the Emperor. A succession of maladies again prostrated her, fever, dropsy, heart trouble and the functional disorder which had now become malignant. Conscious that her end was near she declared Elizabeth her successor, though she feverishly continued her efforts to extirpate the heretics. By this time she had burned three hundred. In November as she lay dying at St. James's Palace she said to one of her women "you shall find Calis lyeing upon my harte." At Lambeth her friend Cardinal Pole was also at the point of death, and messages were exchanged between them. Early in the morning of November 17th 1558 Mary received extreme unction and as the host was raised she bowed her head and died; Pole following her a few hours later. Her body was embalmed and buried in Henry VII's chapel in Westminster Abbey. She was nearly forty-three and had reigned just five years: her husband, afterwards Philip II of Spain, outlived her by forty years.

There are many portraits of Mary and they are not unattractive. "With a grave expression and deep voiced, her eyes dark, lustrous and piercing," she had great dignity of bearing, with much of the majesty of her father; though in later life her ill-health told on her appearance and she became short sighted and sour looking. She rode well, spoke eloquently, was conversant with seven tongues and various instruments of music, and had a passion for ornament and dress. To her friends she was charitable and kindly, an enthusiast for education, popular with her household. She was full of courage and had profound respect for the law. In the first year of her reign she directed the judges "to sit not as advocates for me but as indifferent judges between me and my people,"\* and during Wyatt's rebellion she said to the Londoners "Good subjects, pluck up your hearts and like true men stand fast against these rebels, both our enemies and yours; and fear them not, for I assure you I fear them nothing at all." This was the true daughter of Henry and Katherine, the true sister of Elizabeth.

Of children she was extremely fond, entertaining them and giving them presents, while to her husband she always showed the deepest affection and humility. She writes to him "*Je vivray Monseigneur, en jalousie de V. H. car j'ay commencée desja d'en taster trop a mon grand regret.*"† Her later days were singularly sad. In 1556 the French ambassador says of her: "*La dicte dame ne se laissant veoir en sa chambre que a quatre femmes, le reste du temps est tout employé en pleurs, regrets et en escriptures pour attirer son dict mary, & en collere contre ses subjectz, se trouvant esbahye de l'infidellité de ceulx desquelz elle s'estimoit plus assurée.*"‡

Mary's character was strongly coloured by her Spanish blood and sympathies, her high spirit and the troubles of her youth, but it was dominated by her faith. The loyal child of her mother and her Church she would never admit any faults in either and she held her own against

\* State Trials, i. 72.

† Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, 56.

‡ Ambassades de M. de Noailles, v. 362.



her father and Cromwell in their most despotic days. But she brooded over her wrongs, and her tribulations convinced her that Providence was visiting England for its sins in deserting the Pope. A champion of orthodoxy "she hated to equivocate and was always what she was without dissembling her judgment or conduct for fear or flattery." Once on the throne she allied herself with the most rabid Catholics in Europe, submitting her country to Rome and striving to restore her people to its fold. But her efforts failed, and this she was intelligent enough to see; though her piety made her persevere despite the advice of her husband and her Council. Her mentality is not quite clear. Whether she burnt her subjects' bodies in order to save their souls, whether she did it as a punishment for their heresy, or whether to avenge the sufferings of her co-religionists under her father and brother, it is difficult to determine. Probably the first reason was the basis and it was stimulated later by the other factors. She seems to have developed the mind of a fanatic, for none of her responsible advisers, Philip, Gardiner or Pole, were in favour of her extreme persecution; while Feckenham, her chaplain and confessor, persuaded her to reprieve as many as twenty-eight victims from the stake. Thus she bears the reproach of her actions alone.

Few more desolating reigns, few more depressing lives have been known. She saw her mother divorced, deserted and oppressed, her father trampling on her religion, her brother ruled by heretics. She bore no children, her husband left her, and she lost her last lands overseas. Narrow and exalted, without vision or judgment, out of sympathy with the world and her subjects, her faith only brought her their hatred and the knowledge that her successor would reverse her acts. A despot like Henry, a zealot like Edward, a bigot like Philip, she lacked the cool indifference which distinguished Elizabeth; and in her five years of persecution she did more for the Reformation than her family did in half a century, for she convinced her people that the Roman faith meant the subjection of their minds and bodies to the rule of foreigners.





ELIZABETH

From a picture in the National Portrait Gallery

## ELIZABETH

1533-1603

ELIZABETH TUDOR was born at Greenwich Palace on September 7th 1533 and was baptised three days later, Archbishop Cranmer being her godfather. She was the child of Henry VIII and Anne, daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, Earl of Wiltshire, by Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of Thomas 2nd Duke of Norfolk. Her father and mother had been secretly married in the January preceding her birth, and when in May Henry's union with Katherine of Aragon was pronounced void a more public ceremony had taken place. But in view of the fact that Anne had for some time been living openly with Henry, and that the Pope maintained the orthodoxy of Katherine's position, there was some ground to cavil at Elizabeth's legitimacy.

The first years of her life were spent at Hatfield, Greenwich or Chelsea, Lady Bryan being her governess. During this time her mother's hold on Henry's affections rapidly diminished, and in 1536 Anne was beheaded for incest. The King immediately married Jane Seymour; and two months later Parliament declared the Princess Mary, daughter of Katherine of Aragon, and the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, to be bastards and incapable of inheriting the throne. Both however continued to be treated as royal children and after the birth of Prince Edward in October 1537 they were present officially at his christening. Mary was then eighteen, but Elizabeth was only four and in consequence she was brought up almost entirely with her brother. Queen Jane had died; but in 1540 the arrival of Anne of Cleves

gave the children a stepmother who became an affectionate and constant ally.

As a girl Elizabeth showed remarkable intelligence with her books, learning French, Latin, Italian and music. Her father was busy with his new wives; and by the time she was ten Elizabeth had found a further friend in her fourth stepmother Katherine Parr. To her she writes a long letter sending her a book called *The Mirror of the Sinful Soul*, which she had translated "out of French rhyme into English prose, as well as the capacity of my simple wit and small learning could extend." \* Three years later the antiquary Leland addressed a poem to Elizabeth in which he speaks of her *sermo Latinus*, her *gallica verba* and her *melliflui modi* on the lute.† At this time William Grindal was her principal tutor, though she occasionally had lessons from Sir John Cheke who was teaching Prince Edward. She divided her time between her brother and her sister Mary, with whom she was also friendly, and she moved about between Whitehall, Greenwich, St. James's, Hatfield, Havering-atte-Bower, Cheshunt and Enfield.

In January 1547 her father died, and within a month she received her first proposal of marriage. It was from Thomas, Lord Seymour of Sudeley, Edward's maternal uncle. He was an ambitious and profligate man who had just been made High Admiral and who was jealous of his brother the Protector Somerset. Elizabeth refused him. "My Lord Admiral," she wrote "The letter you have written me is the most obliging and the most eloquent in the world. As I do not feel competent to reply to your many courteous expressions I shall unfold to you in a few words my real sentiments. I confess that your letter very much surprised me, for besides that neither my age nor my inclination allow me to think of marriage, I never could have believed that anyone could have spoken to me of nuptials at a time when I ought to think of nothing but sorrow for the death

\* Wood, *Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies*, iii. 178.

† *Lit. Rem. Edw. VI*, ii. lxxx.

of my father. . . . Permit me then to tell you frankly that as no one more esteems your merit than myself so would I preserve the privilege of recognising it without the strict bond of matrimony which often causes one to forget it." \*

Seymour consoled himself by persuading Queen Katherine to accept his hand, and Elizabeth went to live with them at the Manor House in Chelsea. But his attentions to her became so importunate that on the remonstrance of her governess the Queen sent her away to Hatfield. In September 1548 Katherine died; and Seymour then renewed his proposals to Elizabeth who again refused them.

Roger Ascham had now become her tutor, and with him she read Sophocles, the New Testament, Cicero and Livy. Although only fifteen she had a household of 120 persons and was almost independent. But some secret interviews with Lord Seymour involved them both in difficulties. The Protector knew that his brother was endeavouring to supplant him in the government and he had no intention of allowing him to marry so important a person as Elizabeth. The excuse was sufficient, and in January 1549 Seymour was arrested and soon afterwards beheaded. On hearing of his death Elizabeth remarked "This day died a man with much wit and very little judgment." †

For a time Elizabeth and her household were kept under surveillance; but the King befriended her, and Somerset soon let her alone. Henceforward she remained on good terms with him, until two years later he followed his brother to the block. Northumberland then came into power and he also made a bid for Elizabeth's favour: but she had now made friends with William Cecil, one of the Secretaries of State, and probably at his advice she abstained from politics, though she kept up a correspondence (in Latin) with Edward, whom she was not often allowed to see. When she did so she behaved with the greatest circumspection and humility, kneeling on one occasion five times before taking her place at his table.‡

In July 1553 Edward died. Northumberland had his

\* Wood, iii. 192. † D. N. B., vi. 623. ‡ Thornton Cook, 193.

plans ready for putting his daughter-in-law Jane Grey on the throne, and he at once summoned Elizabeth from Hatfield to London. But she wisely went to bed and lay there safely during the reign of the nine-days Queen. As soon as Mary was proclaimed and the skies had cleared she recovered, and on August 3rd she met her sister on her entry into London and accompanied her in her progress through the streets. She had grown up tall and red haired, with hazel eyes and a bright complexion: she was strong, healthy and full of wit and courage.

Her friendship with Cecil and the Seymours had made Elizabeth suspect by the Catholics. The Protestants spoke of her as their champion; she was much maligned to Mary, and despite her caution she was soon in deep water. Wyatt, an unstable incendiary, Courtenay, a debauched Plantagenet, and Suffolk, Jane Grey's father, laid a plot to place Elizabeth on the throne. *The men of Kent were assembled; correspondents* were suborned in London; and a formidable rising culminated in an attack on the capital. The firmness of Mary and her Council scotched the revolt. Wyatt and his friends were sent to the Tower, and Elizabeth's enemies clamoured for the same sentence on her. During the crisis she had remained at Ashridge and, as before, she said that her health prevented her travelling. Her cousin Lord William Howard was sent to bring her to London; and she came up slowly at six miles a day. At Aldgate she had the curtains of her litter opened and showed herself "pale and thin but proud and undaunted. Before and behind her rode two hundred of her household in scarlet, silver and velvet." At Whitehall she was examined by the Council; but they did not shake her; and she wrote to Mary protesting her innocence: "I never practiced, counselled nor consented to anything that might be prejudicial to your person or dangerous to the state and I pray God to confound me eternally if ever I sent word, messenger or letter to the French Kinge."\* Mary ordered her to the Tower, a

\* Lingard, v. 437.

decree which Elizabeth evaded for two days by writing her letters at St. James's Palace until the tide prevented her starting. At last, on March 17th 1554, she was rowed down to Traitor's Gate, where the guard was drawn up to receive her. As she landed she asked the Lieutenant "Are all these harnessed men for me," and then turning to them she said "I pray you all, good fellows and friends, bear me witness that I come in no traitor but as true a woman to the Queen's Majesty as any now living."\*

For six weeks she remained a prisoner, while Renard the Imperial ambassador did his best to compass her death. But there was a strong feeling for her, King Philip, Gardiner and the Howards stood her friends, and at last milder counsels prevailed. In May she was released and recalled to Richmond. On her way she gave thanks at All Hallows Church and dined on pork and peas at the King's Head Tavern in Mark Lane. She was then sent in the custody of Sir Henry Bedingfield to Woodstock where she remained for six months, carefully conforming to the Catholic religion, until she was at last formally pardoned by the Queen.

At Christmas 1554 she came back to court. She was well treated by Mary and her husband and was allowed to return to Hatfield, where she resumed her Greek and Italian under Ascham and Castiglione. Mary was occupied in burning Protestants, Philip in fighting the French, while the country was growing to hate its rulers. Elizabeth had only to wait. Philip proposed that she should marry the Prince of Savoy, but neither she nor her sister approved the match. Elizabeth burst into tears and swore that she would remain a maid, while Mary wept with her. This eased matters, and Elizabeth wrote to her sister again "I can assure your Highness that since I have known myself I have never had other thought nor wish but of loving and respecting you as my elder sister and of revering and cherishing you as my Queen and mistress."†

By this time Mary had learnt how little her husband

\* Froude, vi. 209.

† Lingard, v. 525.



cared for her and how small was her chance of offspring, while Elizabeth, sure of her own prospects, had no intention of leaving England. As Mary's health grew worse she again became nervous about her sister's faith; but Elizabeth when questioned "prayed that the earth might open and swallow her alive if she were not a true Roman Catholic." \*

On November 17th 1558 Mary died. Elizabeth was at Hatfield, where Cecil had all his dispositions ready. Within a few hours she was peaceably proclaimed amid general and genuine rejoicings. She at once made Cecil her minister, saying to him when he was sworn in "I give you this charge, that you shall be of my Privy Council and content yourself to take pains for me and my realm. This judgment I have of you, that you will not be corrupted by any manner of gift and that you will be faithful to the State: you will give me that counsel which you think best and if you shall know anything necessary to be declared to me of secrecy you shall shew it to myself only and assure yourself that I will not fail to keep taciturnity therein, and therefor I herewith charge you." †

On November 28th Elizabeth rode into London. She wore a purple velvet dress with a scarf and plumed hat, her serjeants-at-arms escorted her, and Lord Robert Dudley, her Master of the Horse rode beside her. For a time she remained at the Tower carefully selecting her ministers. Among them were Winchester, William Howard, Nicholas Bacon and others of the Reformed faith; for she had nothing of the fanatic about her and kept both Catholics and Protestants on the Council. "Men" she said "might think as they liked whatever service they attended." The funeral services for Mary and the Emperor were celebrated in the Roman rite; but on New Year's Day 1559 the epistle, gospel and litany were read in English in the London churches, and at the coronation, performed by the Bishop of Carlisle in default of an unwilling primate, the oath of allegiance recognised Elizabeth as Head of the Church.

\* Wood, iii. 321.

† Strickland, iv. 139.

She soon shewed her spirit. Her first Parliament met in January and at once petitioned her to marry. The country was in low water—the people unnerved, the treasury empty, Calais lost and the French controlling the Channel. England's only ally was Philip of Spain whose hand Elizabeth had already refused. She now told the Commons that she would die a virgin, that she had seen enough of foreign consorts, and that there was no Englishman of rank or character fit to be her mate. With this Parliament had to be content and in May it was dissolved.

To repair the losses and discontents of the late reign much had already been done. Cecil had patched up a peace with France; Gresham had raised a loan in the Netherlands; the Catholic bishops had been sent to the Tower. The court now began to shine with masques, tilts and dances, and gradually security returned. But there were clouds on the horizon. Elizabeth's next heir was her cousin Mary Queen of Scots, a great granddaughter of Henry VII. She had married Francis II of France and she now alleged Elizabeth's illegitimacy and set up her claim to her throne by assuming the English arms. Philip at once drew closer to France; and it looked as if England would be caught between the two. But Elizabeth had a flair for intrigue. She sent Cecil to Scotland to make friends with the Lutheran party, she convinced Philip by her flirtations with Dudley that she was not going to marry, and she restored the financial position in England by reforming the coinage and resuming the crown lands. In 1560 Francis II died; and his widow returned to her native land. Within a short space France was plunged into a war of Huguenots and Leaguers, Spain was engrossed in repressing the Low Countries, while Scotland was distraught by the vagaries of her Queen. Only in England was there peace. Elizabeth despite herself was drawn into the French war on the Protestant side. But an expedition to Rouen did nothing; and Havre, which had been made over to her, she had to surrender. It is possible that these failures did not greatly depress her.

In 1563 she had influenza, and again the Commons begged her to marry. She demurred again, but she made Dudley Earl of Leicester. What their relations were will probably never be known; but Elizabeth let him dispense the royal patronage and even proposed him as a husband for the Queen of Scots, perhaps to increase his status. His influence was opposed to that of Cecil who resented interference in matters of state and did not hesitate to give Elizabeth his views. Once he told her that her cousin the Duchess of Suffolk had married her equerry Adrian Stokes—"What" asked Elizabeth "Has she married her horsekeeper?" "Yea, Madam," said Cecil "and she says you would like to do the same with yours."\* Foreign princes continued to court her. The Kings of Sweden, Denmark, France and Spain were at different times her suitors. The birth of a son to the Queen of Scots, who had married her cousin Lord Darnley, gave them hopes. But when Parliament pressed her to name her successor Elizabeth remained silent. Yet she was well aware of her political isolation. Abroad she was denounced as a heretic and a usurper, and even in England there were signs of disaffection, so that to meet them Cecil was driven to draw a very slight distinction between the Roman faith and treason.

In 1567 Darnley was murdered with the connivance of his wife, who then eloped with Lord Bothwell. Her quarrels with her Scottish subjects increased, until within the year she fled to England. There Elizabeth at once confined her, writing to her: "We have bene very sory of long time for your mishappes and great troubles, so find we our sorrows now doubled in beholding such things as are produced to prove yourself cause of all the same."†

The presence in England of the Queen of Scots soon bred unrest. A Catholic, a claimant and the undoubted heir to the English crown she was a constant danger. The chief men of her religion intrigued for her, their leader the Duke of Norfolk sought her hand, while France, Spain and Rome sent her money and promises. Elizabeth

\* Strickland, iv. 180.

† Wright, i. 302.

shewed no signs of returning to the Roman fold, so Pope Pius V launched against her his bull *Regnans in Excelsis*. It excommunicated her, absolved her subjects from their allegiance, and condoned her murder. Risings followed in the north of England, until Cecil, now Lord Burghley, was at last able to convince his mistress of the risks she ran. Norfolk, Elizabeth's cousin and the only man of his rank in England was brought to the block. Peace was hurriedly made with France, and the Queen Mother Katherine de Medici then successively offered Elizabeth the hands of her sons, the Dukes of Anjou and Alençon. With the latter, a depraved and pock-marked dwarf nineteen years younger than herself, Elizabeth carried on a long and dubious flirtation. She wrote him hundreds of love letters, called him her *petite grenouille*, received him in her bedroom and her shift, and kissed him in public. But the massacre of St. Bartholomew in August 1572 threw the English nation into a fury. When the French ambassador brought Elizabeth more messages from her lover she and her ladies received him dressed in mourning; and though she continued to amuse Alençon with fair words she knew that the match was impossible.

In her daily life she reverted to the times of her Saxon ancestors, for instead of remaining fixed at Greenwich or Windsor she travelled about the country, often staying with her court at the houses of her nobles. It saved her money and it also brought her into closer touch with the people, until she became better known than probably any sovereign had been before her.

The years slipped by, and by the time Elizabeth was forty her character had been formed, her ministers were established and her policy was defined. It was to avoid war or foreign entanglements, to restrain Catholic plots, to profit by divisions abroad and to foster prosperity at home. But such simple plans led to wider issues. Burghley had induced her to support the Netherlands Protestants against the oppression of Philip's viceroy, the Duke of Alva; and as a result the States General asked her to be their ruler, an offer which she wisely declined. Her

subjects when trading to the Spanish Main came into collision with Philip's ships, which they frequently plundered. The Spaniards retaliated; and Englishmen were sent to work on the galleys or imprisoned by the Inquisition. In both countries intense feeling was aroused; and while Philip grew to regard Elizabeth as the fiercest of his foes the English looked on him as the arch papist and tyrant of Europe. The Pope spurred him on to harass the heretical and contumacious Queen and sent Jesuits to England to keep the old faith alive. Parliament passed increasingly severe acts against the Catholics, and a persecution not unlike that of Mary began again. But while Burghley believed that these attacks from abroad should be met by more active measures Elizabeth preferred the easier path, unwilling to incur expense or to jeopardise the affection of her subjects. To her ambassador in France she writes—"My mortal foe can no ways wish me a greater loss than England's hate." \*

Meanwhile at Hardwick the Queen of Scots languished in her prison, never relinquishing her designs against the crown and religion of her rival. In 1584 a conspiracy which included Lords Arundel and Northumberland was discovered. William of Nassau had just been assassinated in Holland, and Burghley in genuine anxiety now formed a private league "to preserve the Queen's Majesty's Royal Person." It was joined by men of every rank throughout the country, for Elizabeth enjoyed the fervent loyalty of her people. At this time her life was in constant peril, and though she herself recked little of the risk her ministers bore a heavy burden. In 1586 there was a second conspiracy in which Mary was involved, and Elizabeth then at last consented to her trial. By a commission of lords the Queen of Scots was condemned to death. Elizabeth strove to evade her execution and even tried to arrange for her murder. She was circumvented however by her ministers, and early in 1587 Mary was beheaded. Elizabeth absolved herself from the deed, threw the blame

\* Wright, ii. 151.

on a secretary and wrote to her cousin King James of Scotland deploring "the unhappy mistake": but few were deceived.

In the Netherlands Leicester was away fighting the Spaniards: Alençon had died, and the earl was back in Elizabeth's graces: Sir Walter Raleigh writes to him—"The Queen is in very good termes with you and thanks be to God, well pacified, and you are agayne her sweet Robyn."\* Maritime war was more paying however than that on land, and Elizabeth preferred private piracy against Spanish treasure ships to protecting Lutherans in the Low Countries. Sir Francis Drake who had commanded several ventures for her now returned from a raid on Cadiz with the news that a monster naval expedition was preparing against England. Philip had convinced himself that he could sweep the English from the seas, while Elizabeth was equally certain that he would never attack her. Both were wrong. Philip despatched the Armada, which was fired, beaten and wrecked in July 1588; Elizabeth, who according to the Lord Admiral, 'was not thoroughly awake,' had so starved her navy that she lost the results of victory. At the last moment she rode down to Tilbury to hearten her trainbands. Her speech there is famous. "My loving people, she said, we have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety to take heed how we commit ourselves to armed multitudes for fear of treachery; but assure you, I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear: I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good will of my subjects. And therefore I am come amongst you at this time, not as for my recreation or sport, but being resolved in the midst and heat of the battle to live or die amongst you all; to lay down, for my God, and for my kingdom, and for my people, my honour and my blood, even in the dust. I know I have but the body of a weak and

\* Wright, ii. 291.

feeble woman, but I have the heart of a King, and of a King of England too ; and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realms." \* This was the true Tudor.

The defeat of the Armada made England secure for the rest of Elizabeth's reign and it raised her to the first place in Europe. It had been won by the courage of her captains and her own *sangfroid*. A month later, when her lover Leicester died, she did not hesitate to sell his goods by auction in order to pay his debts.

The wars of religion were now renewed in France. The Guises were murdered : Katherine de Medici died ; and a few months later the assassination of her last remaining son brought the Valois line to an end. The heir was Henry of Navarre, a Huguenot ; and him Elizabeth faintly supported until he subscribed to the mass, when she gladly recalled her troops. Their commander had been Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, a stepson of Leicester's and his successor in the Queen's affections, although he was nearly forty years her junior. On him she now lavished all her favours, and Cecil and Bacon had to bow before him. In 1595 he took an expedition to Cadiz and caught the Spanish treasure fleet, as much for the benefit of the privy purse as for that of the exchequer. It was the last success of the reign.

Three years later Burghley died. He had been chief minister since Elizabeth's accession and her most trusted adviser. His son Robert Cecil replaced him ; while Essex, the rival candidate, was sent as Lord Deputy to Ireland. His Irish government was a failure, he left his post in disobedience to the Queen's orders, and he then attempted a revolt in London. Despite her love for him Elizabeth sent him to the block. But the blow hit her hard. She was ageing : most of her contemporaries were dead, she was almost isolated, and though she still relied on her popularity she saw that it was waning. A new generation had sprung up with a livelier genius, a disposition to criticise, and a distrust

\* Hume, v. 452.

of absolute rule. But Elizabeth did not change. She kept up her old style of living and her high spirits. She made her progresses to the houses of her favourites, lodging her huge household on them at enormous expense. The regular pageants and masques were performed, the perfunctory odes of flattery pronounced, the prescribed gold purses presented. She rode, hunted, danced, joked with her ministers and thanked the House of Commons for not insisting too rigorously on their rights. Her strong physique however was failing, and early in 1603 she caught a chill which she could not throw off. She removed to Richmond where "an heave dullnesse with a frowardnesse familiar to old age began to lay hold on her, and shee would sit silently, her minde wholly on meditations, impatient of any talke unless with the archbishop with whom she prayed often."\* Nothing had been settled about the succession, and her few intimates could not bring her to a decision. As she grew worse she had delusions, "thrusting into the arras with a sword, weeping and wandering. She slept little and ate only manchet bread and succory pottage." But she was still the Queen, terrible to all who came near. Howard, Buckhurst and Cecil stayed with her, bearing with her whims. "For two dayes and three nyghtes she sate on the stole redie dressed and would never be brought to go to bed, but one day being pulled up by force she stood on her feet fifteen hours."† The lords pressed her to name her heir, but she answered nothing until they mentioned Lord Beauchamp: that roused her and she muttered "I will have no rascal's son in my seat. It is the seat of Kings." Those it is said were her last words. Early on March 24th 1603 she died at the age of sixty-nine, having reigned forty-four years. She was buried by the side of her sister in Westminster Abbey where her effigy used at the ceremony can still be seen. No English monarch had lived to a greater age; only two had had a longer reign.

Queen Elizabeth possessed a tremendous vitality, her

\* Camden, 585.

† Lingard, vi. 6 and 7, note.



mind and body being equally vigorous and enduring. "She walketh apace for her pleasure" says Puttenham "or to catch her a heate in the cold mornings."\* She could hunt all day, dance or play half the night, devote hours to dress or amusement, and yet be able to concentrate on business of state, consider it with care and despatch it with expedition, and receive her ministers or those of foreign countries with courtesy and leisure. Ascham wrote of her that at Windsor she "would reade more Greeke every day than some prebendary of the Church doth read Latin in a whole week."† Her attainments were eminently practical. She knew seven languages and was a fluent speaker and writer in several of them. She was a good performer on the spinet and lute, an active horsewoman and a graceful dancer. But though a sound classical scholar she had little interest in literature or taste in art. Her manners, even for her day, were rough and coarse. She swore at her Council, beat her women in waiting, and once gave Essex a sounding box on the ears.

Like her sister Mary she loved jewels and clothes; she left between three and four hundred gowns and she is credited with being the first Englishwoman to wear silk stockings. At table she was frugal, and her health was probably due to simple food and ample exercise. Of her sexual appetites little is known, though much has been surmised. The child of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, neither of them famous for continence, she was full of temperament and peculiarly susceptible to applause. Yet with many suitors and gallants she had few lovers, though Leicester, Alençon and Essex associated with her under remarkable conditions. She seems never to have given her heart to any man. She could rage, sulk or kiss, but her intellect and her will were: too well controlled to be influenced by appeals to passion, sentiment or humanity. When she sent a subject to the rack, the stake or the block, when she dismissed a minister, sold up a friend, or forbade a marriage, the determining factor was

\* Seward, i. 138.

† *Ibid.*, i. 146.

the good of the State or her own convenience. Expediency came first in her economy.

Like Edward and Mary she had never been outside England, and to this partly was due her insularity and her contempt for foreigners, whom she only saw under the worst circumstances for them. Yet she was a true child of the Renaissance, "the Italianised Englishwoman who was the devil incarnate." Her mother, her step-mother and her uncle had been beheaded by her father, her earliest lover by her brother, while she had nearly suffered the same fate at the hands of her sister. For years she had been treated as a bastard. She had often been forced to deny her faith. Before she was twenty-five she had seen the Protector, the Primate, the Chancellor and the Treasurer executed out of hand. Such experiences left their mark, and Elizabeth lived up to them, sending her heir the Queen of Scots, her cousin the Duke of Norfolk, and her lover, Lord Essex, to the same block.

The troubles of her youth had taught her caution. She had learnt to dissemble, to be silent or to lie, and she grew up close, cold-hearted, opportunist and tyrannical. But though she cared for power she cared for public opinion, and though her rule was patriarchal it was also patriotic: she was the first English sovereign who made her duties a profession. Courage and pride like all her family she had in full: the former never diminished and the latter increased with her age. Flattery she would accept to any extent, and her courtiers treated her as a paragon and a peer. Revengeful, even ferocious at times, parsimonious and acquisitive, she took everything she could get, rarely rewarding her most faithful servants with ought but thanks. In the course of her reign she paid Burghley nine visits at Theobalds, and each visit cost him nearly £3,000: many of the Spanish ventures were due to her personal interest in their profits, though she always complained bitterly of her navy's cost.

In religion she was profoundly secular\* but she conformed to the practices of her father's day. She lit candles

\* Lytton Strachey, *Elizabeth and Essex*, 14.

on her altar, despised married bishops, and equally disliked her own and the Pope's supremacy. When she burnt papists she did it, like her father, from policy, and not like her sister from faith. What she believed herself none can say. As she lay dying, and the archbishop put her in mind to think on God—"That I doe (sayd shee), neither doth my minde wander from him." \*

Her wit was ready and wide: her definition of the sacrament and her illustration of a rape and a rapier are well known. When the profligate Noel was presented to her she said at once

"The word for negation and letter for fifty  
Is that gentleman's name who can never be thrifty"

though her puns were often on a lower level. If she had an unsatisfied want it was to be a mother: on hearing of James' birth she said "The Queen of Scots hath a fair son and I am but a barren stock."

At the beginning of her reign Elizabeth was the true centre of English thought and life, in real touch with her people. But her ministers were her seniors in age and as they died away, though her position grew more powerful, her personality became more remote. A generation of heroes and poets glorified her, but she never understood them: Sidney, Spenser and Shakespeare meant little to her—she was in closer sympathy with men like Gresham, Burghley and the elder Bacon. Except when angry her actions were carefully calculated, and a Macchiavellian policy, narrow but tenacious, usually directed her aims: "She never chose a straight way if she could find a crooked one." She would avoid a decision as long as it was humanly possible; and when it had to be taken she would, if she could, throw it on another.

Macaulay has portrayed her salient traits—the haughty glance of her eagle eye, her imperious language to Parliament, her legislation by proclamation, her imprisonment and torture of her subjects without trial, her exact

\* Camden, Elizabeth, 586.

prescription of religious faith and discipline joined with an almost complete indifference to the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. These were her faults, well known in her own days and more clearly realised since. But she had also striking virtues, among them that of compelling loyalty and of inspiring her subjects to put forth their best. She always stood for peace so long as it was possible: "No war, my lords, no war," she would say rapping the Council board. Camden wrote of her "Never was prince more dread, never more deere," while King James said that in wisdom and felicity of government she surpassed all princes since Augustus.\* "By sheer force of character she gained for herself the credit of all the achievements which her people effected in peace or war."†

Well schooled in body and mind Elizabeth had used her opportunities in youth so well that when she came to be Queen she was better fitted for ruling England than most of her predecessors had been. Conscious of her limitations she governed her people for the best, guiding them when she could, driving them when she must. She accepted the reformed religion, broke the might of Spain and the terrors of Rome, and yet deferred in moderation to democracy. Her name and her reign mark an epoch, for under her auspices, perhaps despite them, England rose to be the first nation in the world and Englishmen first grew into patriots. Whether as "Gloriana," the "Virgin Queen" or "Good Queen Bess," all titles to which she had a doubtful claim, her name is still as cherished in England as it is envied throughout the world.

\* Camden, 580.

† D. N. B., vi. 649.



THE STUARTS

1603-1714

The Stuarts succeeded to the crown of England at a time when the country was peaceable, prosperous and powerful. They came in without dispute or disturbance as the undoubted heirs ; and the alliance of the two kingdoms cemented the position of both. James I was a first cousin of Queen Elizabeth, he had been a King for over thirty years and he had had the opportunity of profiting from his own experience and from the examples of his predecessors.







JAMES I  
IN 1621

from the picture by D. Mytens in the National Portrait Gallery

## JAMES I

1566-1625

JAMES STUART, afterwards James VI of Scotland and I of England, was born in Edinburgh Castle on 19th January 1566, the only child of Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley and Duke of Albany, by Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots and widow of Francis II of France. The suggestions that James was the son of David Rizzio, Mary's Italian secretary, or was a substituted child have little to support them. His mother was the daughter and heiress of James V, who was son of James IV by Margaret Tudor, elder daughter of Henry VII of England: his father was the eldest son of the 4th Earl of Lennox by Lady Margaret Douglas, who was also a daughter of Margaret Tudor by her second husband the 6th Earl of Angus. His parents were thus first cousins and after the issue of Henry VIII they were the next heirs to the crown of England, Mary being senior in blood to her husband. James's descent however was not auspicious, for five out of six of his immediate predecessors on the Scottish throne had lost their lives by the sword, and his father, mother and son were to do the same.

He was baptised on December 17th in Stirling Cathedral, his sponsors being his uncle by marriage Charles IX of France and his cousin Queen Elizabeth. Six weeks later his father was murdered at Kirk of the Field near Edinburgh, almost certainly with his mother's connivance. Mary then eloped with Lord Bothwell, was compelled by her Council to abdicate, and soon afterwards fled to England where she was confined for the rest of her life.

On 29th July 1567, when he was over a year old, James was crowned King of Scotland. He was then confided to the care of Lord and Lady Mar while the government was carried on by a series of Regents. The first of these, his uncle Lord Moray, was murdered in 1570; the second, his grandfather Lord Lennox, was killed in battle in 1571; the third, his guardian Lord Mar, died a year later; and the duty then devolved on Lord Morton who was not beheaded for nearly a decade.

In his education the young King learnt quickly and got a good knowledge of Latin and French, but physically he was so backward that he could not walk until he was six. His tutor, George Buchanan the historian, had no great opinion of him and treated him with some severity. Once when James and his companions were making a noise Buchanan told them to stop: James said "Let us see who will bell the cat," whereupon Buchanan gave him a sound beating.

In 1578 Lord Morton resigned the regency and three years later he was executed. The chief control was then acquired by Esme Stuart, a cousin of James, who was successively created Earl and Duke of Lennox. Scotland at this time was governed partly by the Parliament House of feudal nobles and partly by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, a poor, powerful and strongly anti-papal Convocation. Between the two a continual struggle went on, and James was the pawn coveted by both. In 1582 he was seized by the Earl of Gowrie and other lords and forced to dismiss and exile Lennox. "He dissassentit tharunto with tearis, but he prevailit nathing."\* A year later he escaped from his captors and got into communication with his French cousins the Guises, and for a time he was drawn towards Catholicism. But Elizabeth, who was almost as strong in Scotland as in England, promised him a pension of £4,000 a year and so retained his alliance.

In February 1587, when he was just twenty-one, Mary Queen of Scots was executed at Fotheringay for plotting

\* *Historie of King James the Sixth*, 190.

against Elizabeth. James protested;\* but there was little that he could do. He knew his mother's misdeeds and he was anxious not to jeopardise his annuity or his succession to the English throne, though Mary had bequeathed these rights to Philip of Spain which did not perhaps prepossess her son in her favour.

During the attack of the Armada James adhered closely to Elizabeth and he gradually became her more or less faithful ally. His position in his own country was so uncomfortable from the feuds of the nobles, the divisions in the Church, the lack of revenue and the general licence, that he was glad to rely upon his powerful cousin, and he used to say that Elizabeth managed Scotland as much as she did England.

He had grown up a heavy, blonde, ruddy-faced man, lubberly in gait and appearance and not very strong, but with plenty of shrewd wit. In September 1589 he was married by proxy to the Princess Anne, daughter of Frederick II of Denmark, and in October of that year he sailed to Oslo in Norway, where he found his bride snow-bound in the mountains on her way to meet him. The religious ceremony was celebrated a month later. This was James's only journey abroad, the only romantic incident in his career. After passing the winter in Denmark he returned to Scotland in the following May with his bride. She was a lusty virago, not remarkable for her looks, manners or morals, but physically a good mate for a man of weak constitution. She soon came to despise James and as a conscientious Catholic she tried to rule him, though with little success.

The feudal, financial and religious troubles of Scotland still continued; and James had to suffer revolts, rebukes and a constant tutelage which made his position as painful as it was ridiculous. Melville, a clergyman, once publicly called him "God's silly vassal"; and James himself from his seat in church used to shout and argue at the preacher in the pulpit. For ten years he struggled with nobles, burghers and clergy, alternately their puppet

\* Ellis, i., iii. 19.

or scapegoat, until by a deft use of one against the other he at last turned the tables on them all. Having learnt, as he thought, the art of ruling, he wrote his *Basiliikon Doron*, a pamphlet to guide his eldest son Prince Henry. He followed it by *The True Law of Free Monarchies*, which set out his ideal of the divine and absolute position of an anointed King.

In 1600 occurred the curious conspiracy known as the Gowrie plot. Lord Gowrie and his brother Alexander Ruthven hated James for the execution of their father. One day when James was hunting near Falkland the younger Ruthven induced him to visit the family castle near Perth "to find a treasure and hear secret news." The bait caught. James entered the castle alone and in an upper chamber was threatened, he said, with instant death. Opening a window he cried 'Treason' \* to his followers below, and one of his servants immediately ran up and slew the Ruthven brothers. James was then rescued by Lord Mar and Lennox and escaped to Edinburgh, where he ordered public thanksgivings to be made all over Scotland. This tale however was believed by few, and it was suggested that the plot had really been laid by James himself who wished to avenge an intrigue of one of the Ruthvens with the Queen.

For many years James had expected the reversion of the crown of England and to ensure his position there he had entered into a clandestine correspondence with Robert Cecil, the Secretary of State. So well arranged were their plans that on Elizabeth's death in March 1603 James succeeded to the English throne without delay or dispute. He was a man of thirty-seven, the father of a promising family, a ruler of standing who had been taught by experience the art of government. But despite his opportunities, despite his real wit, scholarship and talent, he entirely failed to gauge the spirit of his new subjects. He had been all his life poor and hampered, "effrayit, constraynd, offendit,"—and he now expected to become at once comfortable, rich and supreme. The

\* Hist. K. James VI, 375.

English however for half a century had been accustomed to economy, while their Parliament had been steadily growing in power: and James found that though he could get more money than he had been used to, it was on conditions that were not at all to his taste.

He made a slow and stately progress to London, marred by some exhibitions of bad taste. There he took the title of King of Great Britain and added the arms of Scotland and Ireland to the English shield, though the governments remained distinct. At first he had a steady counsellor in Cecil, whom he created Earl of Salisbury; and matters went on fairly well, the King seconding his minister's efforts to unite the civil and religious systems of the two countries. But the English Parliament was suspicious of James' methods, while the Scots were all against bishops. James, experienced in the broils of Presbyterians and with some sympathy for his mother's faith, had a deep respect for the English hierarchy, and he was torn between sentiment and expediency, religion and policy. Almost at once the Catholics began to conspire against him, the Main and Bye Plots taking place in the first year of his reign. These were attempts to obtain toleration, and after their suppression James summoned the Hampton Court Conference. It was a vain endeavour to reconcile two opposing lines of thought, and during it the King could not refrain from teaching the prelates their business and developing his own theories. "If you aim at a Scottish presbytery," he said, "it agreeth as well with monarchy as God with the Devil. No Bishop, no King!" Opportunities of displaying his wit were meat and drink to him, and he talked Latin, argued on theology and wallowed in the flattery of sycophants with equal gusto.

In 1605 came the Gunpowder Plot which though scotched like its predecessors showed that the Pope and Spain were still strong in England. With Spain James had already made an unpopular peace and he had tried to be lenient to the Catholics; but Parliament now increased the penalties against them. The King's remedy was a succession of pamphlets composed

by his own hand and not without scholarship or sense, though hardly written in a style appealing to his subjects. His Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance, which dealt in detail with the vials of the Apocalypse, was translated into Latin and French, the Archbishop of York received it with tears, on his knees and presentation copies were sent to all the princes of Europe: those of Spain and Austria refused it, while the French ambassador described it as "*le plus fou et le plus pernicieux que se soit jamais fait.*" \*

The King's next project was the Great Contract, a scheme of Salisbury's for the capitalisation of the feudal aids still enjoyed by the Crown in exchange for a fixed revenue. Its rejection by Parliament confirmed James's belief in his need for absolute power. The Commons were becoming daily more insistent on their privileges. Monopolies, impositions, enclosures, legislation by proclamation, and particularly the Court of High Commission, all irritated them, until in 1610 their protests led to a dissolution. James's arbitrary methods in government and religion went on; and to avoid them many decent folk began to cross the Atlantic to the new American colonies, while there was general discontent among all sections of the people. Meanwhile in the palace at Greenwich money flowed like water. Banquets, balls, plays and pageants, with a good deal of lechery and liquor, scandalised the more sober-minded. The King hunted, ate, danced, drank, wrote, and colloqued with courtiers, scholars and theologians. He rated the Commons, preached to the bishops, laid down the law to the judges, and harangued the foreign envoys, until he became the laughing stock of Europe.

In 1612 his heir Prince Henry died, leaving only a younger brother Charles, Duke of York, and a sister Elizabeth, who was betrothed to the Elector Palatine, one of the principal Protestant princes of Germany. In the same year Salisbury succumbed to overwork. James was thus left to his own devices. He fell at once into the hands

\* Lingard, vii. 97, note.

of favourites, for he had little use for men who spoke their minds. Coke the Chief Justice was dismissed for refusing to submit to the King's dictation; Bacon the Attorney-General preferred to prostitute his conscience rather than sacrifice his place.

The government was now controlled by courtiers who were usually recommended by their looks. The first was Robert Carr, created Earl of Somerset, who after an inglorious ministry of four years disappeared in an abyss of magic, infamy and murder. He was succeeded by George Villiers, a young and penniless adventurer with a handsome face and attractive manner, whom James, now in his fiftieth year, idolised with an affection that was credited with worse motives. In a few months Villiers was made an earl, a Knight of the Garter and Master of the Horse, was given vast estates, and was allowed to dispense all the royal patronage and in effect to rule the state. By such actions James alienated the affections of many of his subjects. His second Parliament he tried to suborn, and when the Commons petitioned for redress he dissolved them. The courts of law were set aside, and case after case was cited before the Star Chamber or High Commission; while ordinary legislation was conducted by orders in Council. The King drew closer to Spain, vainly hoping to conciliate and disarm the Catholics; and Gondomar the Spanish ambassador soon became more powerful than any English minister, for James's latest though secret wish was to marry his son to a Spanish Infanta.

In 1619 the Queen died. Profusely extravagant and fond of ridiculing her husband, to whom she was probably not always faithful, she "was eminent neither for her vices nor her virtues," though she had exercised some moderating influence over James. He was still beset by difficulties. His son-in-law, the Elector Frederick, had been chosen King of Bohemia and had set off to secure his crown. But France and Spain disapproved; and as James dared not oppose them the venture ended in defeat. To appease the Spaniards further Raleigh,



almost the last of Elizabeth's captains, was executed on his return from an unsuccessful treasure quest in South America.

James now made public his plan for the marriage of Prince Charles. It was so unpopular that to emphasise their views the new Parliament expressed a definite disapproval of the royal policy. Mompeyson, a courtier, was heavily fined for holding monopolies; while Bacon, the Chancellor and the greatest philosopher of his age, was impeached for corruption in administering justice. When the Commons protested that all matters of state were proper for them to discuss James called them the "three hundred Kings," and when they sent him a deputation he ordered "stools to be brought for the ambassadors." He refused to admit their claims, saying that he would govern "for the common weal and not for the common will," and he then again dissolved the Houses, imprisoned several leading members of the Commons including Coke, Selden and Pym, and on December 30th 1621 sent for their journals and with his own hands tore out the offending resolutions.

A year later Prince Charles, with Buckingham in attendance, went off to Madrid to see his destined bride; but after several months nothing was achieved, for the Spaniards were only interested in restoring the Roman faith in England, and this James would not do. So Charles and Buckingham, now a duke, returned, and the match was broken off. The Spaniards took offence; and the next Parliament was not unwilling to vote supplies for a war against them. Monopolies were again declared illegal; Middlesex, the Lord Treasurer, who led the Spanish party, was impeached; and having gained these victories, Parliament gave its approval to the marriage of Charles with a Princess of France.

By this time James had let the government pass completely into the hands of Buckingham. He was becoming almost senile and was usually occupied in producing his pamphlets, *The Peacemaker*, *Meditations on the Lord's Prayer*, and the like. Early in 1625 he caught a chill

which developed into a quartan ague. He retired to his favourite house of Theobalds in Hertfordshire and there he grew rapidly worse. Buckingham's mother came to doctor him and was afterwards accused of giving him poison, though there is little colour for the tale. James however had always had a weak constitution and after a short illness he died on March 27th 1625. He was fifty-nine and had reigned in Scotland fifty-eight and in England twenty-two years. He was buried in Westminster Abbey. Of his seven children two only survived him, Charles who succeeded and Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, the ancestress of the House of Hanover.

James I was above the middle size, well enough made though fat in later life. His beard was thin and his hair light brown, 'his eyes large and rolling, his tongue too large for his mouth so that he dribbled his drink, his legs so weak that he was always leaning on men's shoulders.' He was naturally nervous, particularly of a drawn sword, a trait which was ascribed to the murder of Rizzio in front of his mother before his birth, and he wore his clothes heavily quilted so as to turn a dagger.

In his dress he was careless, and his appearance on a horse was ludicrous, for he used a saddle with so high a pommel and cantle that "he was rather carried than rode." Hunting was his principal pastime and for this he would forego any other business, as he thought the exercise necessary for his health: but he was so poor a rider that he had frequent falls, on one occasion being thrown head-first into a pond and nearly drowned. He played golf and cards, was an inveterate cock-fighter, and admired and acted in masques. In gardening he took a keen interest: he planted mulberry trees on the site where Buckingham Palace now stands. He usually lived at Greenwich or Theobalds and he was the last King who used the Tower as a residence. In eating and drinking he was regular and voracious, new fruit being his favourite food, with heavy wines drunk in sips and often to excess. In later life he became lazy and often went to bed in the afternoon. Among his special dislikes

were pigs, witches and tobacco, against the two latter of which he produced literary 'counter-blasts.'

A genuine student with considerable learning James was also a prolific writer and talker: Henry IV called him the wisest fool in Christendom, *un vrai pédant pour un beau morceau comme l'Angleterre*. He was ready in retort, though his chief idea of wit was oaths and puns, and his ordinary conversation had little dignity. D'Ewes describes him on a progress from Whitehall to Westminster as "looking up to a window full of gentlemen and ladies, and crying out 'A pox take ye, are ye there' at which being much ashamed they all withdrew from the window." \* Equally depressing were his fits of temper, for he lost all sense of reason, first in not controlling and next in apologising for them. He would kick and cuff his pages and then beg their pardons in tears. Yet he was naturally good tempered, though in old age he grew fretful and despondent. His religious views were unstable, for he was half a Calvinist and half an Episcopalian, hating the government of Presbyterians as much as he feared the power of Catholics; yet he made real attempts to appease religious feuds. He chose his friends for their superficial attractions and rarely failed to desert them at a pinch. He used to kiss Somerset and slobber over his face and neck, and he wore a picture of Buckingham under his doublet; but the aspersions that have been cast on his morals are probably unjustified. Bishop Goodman says that "he was of himself a very chaste man and there was little in the Queen to make him uxorious, so that he was never taxed or tainted with the love of any other lady." But he had a great affection for children, an unrestrained admiration for beauty and a doting fondness for his favourites, which in a licentious and evil-speaking court lent some colour to the imputations which were cast upon him. †

At his first coming to England, after years of economy in Scotland, his extravagance was colossal, for strangely enough he had little idea of the value of money. He used

\* Halliwell, i. 170.      † Goodman, Court of James I, i. 168.

to spend immense sums on pageants and gifts to his favourites: Buckingham had at least £100,000 from him in three years; and James would order presents of £20,000 to be given from the exchequer to different Scottish noblemen. After his difficulties with Parliament he became more careful. In 1622 he writes to Charles in Madrid "My babie, ye must be as spairing as ye can in youre spending: God knowis how my coffers are alreadie drainit." \* His economies were unfortunate, for he neglected the navy more than any King did for centuries.

For many years the pensioner of his powerful cousin, long inured to rebukes from his clergy, outrages from his lords, contempt from his wife and parsimony from his Parliament, the whole tenour of James's life was changed by his succession to the coveted crown of England; and like the proverbial beggar he determined to enjoy his good fortune. 'I sit here' he used to say, 'and rule Scotland with my pen which before could hardly be done with the sword.' Busy, vain and unsettled, his brain more active than his body, his desire to display knowledge even greater than his passion for acquiring it, he embarked on what he thought was Elizabeth's system of government, with peers and prelates, clergy and commons, land and law all subject to his will. Under Salisbury's guidance he chafed, though for a time he strove to bear it, in order to reconcile religion and promote peace. But by 1612 his early projects had miscarried and his minister had died. Freed from control, schooled as he thought in politics, flattered by all, he came to believe himself the wisest King in Christendom. Mediation was his panacea for every ill; and he was too sceptical or too flighty to understand the genuine convictions of either Puritans or Papists. Fearing the Spaniards, deriding the Dutch, despising the Germans, his self-satisfied diplomacy led him out of his depth and made him a prey to sycophants whose only aim was riches. Somerset was so incapable that the court was able to upset him, but Buckingham had the wit to enlist the support of

\* Ellis, i., iii. 139.

Bacon and Prince Charles, until James fell entirely under his sway. Witty, canny and amusing, a cheery buffoon, vain of his scholarship and position yet unable to appraise the dignity of either, James was as good a judge of books as he was a bad one of men. He kept Raleigh in the Tower for fourteen years until Prince Henry remarked 'Only my father would keep such a bird in such a cage.' Crafty and timorous, an advocate of peace at any price, with a curious lack of vision and understanding he brought the English monarchy into contempt at a time when its critics were serious, strenuous and increasing. Admiring and anxious to trade on the Tudor tradition he only succeeded in bringing it to a ruin as rapid as it was radical.





CHARLES I

*From the picture by D. Mytens in the National Portrait Gallery*

## CHARLES I

1600-1649

CHARLES I, called the Martyr, was born on November 19th 1600 at Dunfermline Castle, the second son of James VI of Scotland by Anne, daughter of Frederick II of Denmark. At his christening he was created Duke of Albany, the title of his unfortunate grandfather Darnley, and four years later, when James had succeeded to the English crown, he was made Duke of York. His guardians had been Lord and Lady Fyvie, but he was then entrusted to Lady Cary. Like his father he was so weak in his ankles as a child that it was feared they were out of joint; "he was not able to go nor stand alone," and it was long before he could speak. His physical defects at this time were so considerable that there was little competition to be responsible for him. Lady Cary however succeeded in improving his health; and he gradually grew stronger, though he always retained an impediment in his speech.

James had had seven children, most of whom had died as infants. His elder son, Henry, Prince of Wales was seven years older than Charles, and the latter's only companion as a boy was his sister Elizabeth, who was four years his senior. In 1607 Thomas Murray became his tutor and under his guidance Charles made considerable progress in religious studies, so that his brother used to promise to make him Archbishop of Canterbury. Charles remained with Lady Cary until he was twelve, when, by the death of his brother, he became heir to the throne: four years later he was created Prince of Wales. His education had been well watched, and he had already



acquired the high notion of prerogative and the deep interest in theology which distinguished his father.

James had just betrothed his daughter Elizabeth to the Elector Palatine, afterwards King of Bohemia, and he now began to consider the marriage of his son. After a French princess had been discarded a secret negotiation was started for wedding Charles to the Infanta Maria, daughter of Philip III of Spain. Charles was by no means an unattractive suitor. In appearance he was small, slight and pale, but he was well formed and elegant. An expert in the manly exercises of his day, a hardy and successful tilter, an adept at "vaulting, riding the great horse, running at the ring, shooting in crossbows, muskets and sometimes great pieces of ordnance, in book-learning and divinity he rivalled his father, who used to say that he could manage a point of controversy with any prelate." He had learnt French and Italian, understood the classics, had an excellent knowledge of mathematics, and paid close attention to painting, architecture, music and industry. He was modest, serious, dignified, well mannered, and exceptionally moral with women; but he was silent, obstinate and rather slow.

At the age of eighteen Charles began his intimacy with Buckingham which was to last for the latter's life. The favourite, some years his senior, was the handsomest and most accomplished person at court and the most powerful subject in England. In a few years he had risen from a commoner to a dukedom and from poverty to immense riches. He had a genuine taste for beauty, and it was in his society that Charles developed his knowledge and appreciation of art. The two became fast friends and in politics as in other matters they took the same views. Chafing at the spirit of the House of Commons Charles writes to his friend in 1621: "Stinie, the lower house this day has been a little unruly, but I hope it will turn to the best, for before they rose they began to be ashamed of it: yet I could wish the King would send down a commission that if need were such seditious fellows might be made an example of to others.

. . . It will be seen whether they mean to do good or to persist in their follies, so that the King needs to be patient but a little while . . . I defy thee in being more mine than I am thy constant loving friend Charles P."

As the Spanish match hung fire Buckingham now suggested a visit to Madrid, so that Charles might press his suit. The King was opposed to the journey saying that he "would never see his two boys again"; but hoping that Philip might help his son-in-law to recover the Bohemian crown he eventually consented; and in February 1623 Charles and Buckingham set off on their journey. They travelled under the name of Smith with only a few servants, and their incognito, if known, was respected. In Paris from a gallery of the palace Charles first saw his future wife Henrietta Maria: he writes to his father "We saw the young Queene, little Monsieur and Madame at the practising of a Maske, and in it there danced the Queene with nineteen faire dancing Ladies, among which the Queene is the handsomest, which hath wrought in me a greater desier to see her sister. So, in haste, going to bed we humblie take our leaves and rest Your Majesties most humble and obedient sone and servant Charles, and your humble slave and dogge Steenie."

In Madrid the handsome pair were received with open arms and fêted lavishly at banquets and balls. But the discussions about the marriage were drawn out. Dispensations were required from Rome, clauses added to treaties, and presents exchanged, until after several months nothing was concluded; and it became clear that the Spaniards were only concerned with the conversion of England to the Roman faith and were never going to help the Elector. The staid deportment of Charles had made a good impression on them; but Buckingham's casual manners had done the reverse, and in addition he had fallen out with Olivares the chief minister. In September 1623 the pair returned home, and when Charles landed at Portsmouth he was wildly welcomed for not bringing a Spanish bride. Realising that he had been jockeyed he now turned against the whole

project and with Buckingham eagerly pressed his father to declare war on Spain. The change was popular with Parliament and people ; so the match was broken off and its prime mover Middlesex, the Lord Treasurer, was impeached. James said sadly that Charles and Buckingham were preparing rods for their own backs but he let them have their way. At this time Charles is described as "diligent and indefatigable in business, a patient hearer, judicious, moderate, and steady, often called to speak in Parliament." \*

A proposal was now made for Charles to marry Henrietta Maria of France a daughter of Henry IV ; and though Cardinal Richelieu insisted on her household being accorded religious privileges which had been denied to the Spanish princess, Buckingham persuaded James to agree ; and in December 1624 the contract was signed.

During the winter preparations were pushed on for the war with Spain, Buckingham as Lord High Admiral being the principal authority concerned. In March 1625 the King died ; and Charles celebrated his accession by investing his friend with powers even wider than those he already enjoyed. The duke was sent to Paris to bring over the Princess, and while there he concluded a damaging treaty and much annoyed the French by his attentions to their Queen. In June the royal marriage was celebrated at Canterbury, the bride being only fifteen but full of wit and vigour. Charles then established himself at St. James's Palace and a few days later he met his first Parliament.

The King's idea was to recover the Palatinate for his brother-in-law, and for this he expected Parliament to grant his demands for supplies. But to such vague and alien commitments they were strongly opposed, while they were genuinely concerned about religion and the position of Buckingham. Their grants therefore came far short of what Charles looked for, and they were accompanied by open attacks on the favourite. Charles stood by Buckingham and used the plague as an

\* Seward, i. 280.

excuse for dissolving Parliament in August. But money was a necessity ; so he raised loans of privy seal at home and sent Buckingham over to Holland to pawn some of the crown jewels. At the same time he despatched a naval expedition to Cadiz. Both ventures were failures ; and in February 1626 he was compelled to summon a second Parliament. To ensure its being more favourable he excluded the leading members of the opposition from it by nominating them as sheriffs, and he refused writs to several peers. Immediately the Commons met they impeached Buckingham. Charles sent the two principal speakers to the Tower, but as the House refused to proceed with any business until they were released he had to give way. To protect Buckingham however he again dissolved Parliament, replying to their request for a few days' delay "No, not a minute."

This was an unfortunate beginning to his reign ; nor were his domestic affairs prospering. The Queen's Catholic attendants were discontented, disliked and extravagant ; and despite his young wife's protests Charles was compelled to dismiss them. The seizures of French ships at sea led to recriminations with Richelieu ; and Charles soon found himself at war with France as well as with Spain. Buckingham, by now the most hated man in England, was anxious to retrieve his position ; and he induced the King to let him lead an expedition to relieve the French Huguenots who were besieged by their countrymen in Rochelle. At vast expense a force was despatched, but through treachery and mismanagement it was heavily defeated ; and Buckingham, despite his personal bravery, returned to England even more execrated than before.

In March 1628 Charles's third Parliament met. He immediately made it clear that his will and not theirs was to be done. "If you," he said, "should not do your duties in contributing what this state needs, I must, in discharge of my conscience use those other means which God hath put into my hands."\* The opposition, led by

\* Journals of Parlt., 687.

Sir Thomas Wentworth, at once petitioned for the redress of grievances—illegal levying of taxes, arbitrary imprisonment, billeting of troops and innovations in religion. But first and foremost they demanded the dismissal of Buckingham. In May they passed the Petition of Right, which Charles granted in return for five subsidies. Then with some promises he prorogued them. He was already preparing a new expedition for Rochelle when in August, before it had started, Buckingham was assassinated at Portsmouth. The news was brought to Charles in church: he knelt unmoved until the service was over and then went to his lodgings and flung himself on his bed in a passion of grief. Buckingham had been his first and almost his only friend for ten years; from him Charles had learnt his earliest lessons in love, art and government, and to be deprived of his counsel and companionship at this critical juncture of his life was a shattering blow. Never again did he rely so much on any minister and for the future he turned mainly to the Queen. His differences with her were now healed, and for the rest of his reign he was a devoted and uxorious husband, deferring in all matters of policy except religion to a character stronger and more versatile than his own. Even her faith secured considerable liberty, for the fines on Catholics were remitted by the King, and there were a number of conversions in the higher ranks of society. An expensive visit by her mother to the English court did not make the Queen more popular, and she was regarded as an evil influence.

At this moment Charles was cheered by the accession of two new allies:—Laud, a thoroughgoing royalist who had just become Bishop of London, and Wentworth, who suddenly left the opposition and joined the King's party. The former, a methodical, obstinate and strenuous High Churchman, became Charles's chief adviser in ecclesiastical affairs; the latter, a statesman of dauntless capacity, loyal and unscrupulous, was at once made a peer and President of the Council of the North. Both were exceptional men and both strove to exalt the prerogative, Laud by his principles and Wentworth by his practice.

In January 1629 Parliament met once more and resumed its battle with the King. In a few weeks there was a fresh explosion, and the Commons, holding the Speaker down in his chair, passed resolutions that all who should levy or pay taxes or should introduce new methods in religion except with their authority were enemies of the state. In March they were dissolved and their leaders were again sent to the Tower.

For eleven years Charles now governed England as a despot. Unlike his father he was rigidly economical, but he entirely lacked the arts of popularity and was quite out of touch with the feeling of his people. To get money he resorted to ancient expedients. Tonnage and poundage were collected as before, further loans of privy seal were levied, fines were raised for distraint of knighthood, monopolies were granted to favoured merchants, and all these practices were enforced by the Star Chamber, the court of High Commission and the judges; when the last-named disagreed with the King they were dismissed. In 1630 the public expenses were somewhat reduced by a peace with France and Spain, and an able ministry was then appointed; while the King's position was strengthened by the birth of a son. In 1633 Charles went to Scotland to be crowned, where his High Church ceremonies much annoyed the Scots. On his return to London he appointed Wentworth Lord Deputy of Ireland and Laud Archbishop of Canterbury.

During these years the court lived a comparatively quiet life. Charles had plenty to do and in his leisure he turned to art. With a genuine taste for painting he gradually brought together a collection of pictures as fine as any in Europe. But finance remained a constant menace to his schemes of government; and as he was ready to proceed to any extremity rather than call another Parliament, writs were now issued for ship-money, an obsolete tax dating from Plantagenet days. At first only the maritime towns were assessed, but soon the system was extended to the inland boroughs and counties. With many others John Hampden, a Bucking-

hamshire squire, refused to pay. He was pronounced contumacious and imprisoned by the judges; but his action was applauded, supported and followed by public meetings of freeholders throughout the country, a new and ominous development of democracy.

Religious matters were not more promising. Laud, the fanatical exponent of an absolutist dispensation of his own devising, had propounded a liturgy which he induced Charles to apply to Scotland. In England this ritual was disliked, but beyond the Tweed it was anathema. A covenant against such innovations was drawn up by the Church assemblies of the northern kingdom, and in 1639 the Scottish Parliament formally abolished episcopacy and made warlike preparations to resist it. Charles with the few regular forces he had marched against them; and peace for the moment was secured. He had behind him Wentworth, now Earl of Strafford, who had trained a formidable army in Ireland and whose policy of "Thorough," *i.e.* to suppress opposition by arms, was equally approved by the archbishop and the King.

By this time the whole process of government had become so difficult, so strained, and so hated that Charles was compelled by public opinion to resort again to more legitimate means, and early in 1640 he summoned the Short Parliament. Finding that it was going to refuse his demands for a subsidy he almost immediately dissolved it. The Scots, who were in close touch with the English opposition, then invaded England and succeeded in defeating the royal troops at Newark. Charles thereupon collected a council of peers at York, but being unable to get sufficient money or support from them he was finally forced to call the Long Parliament. In November 1640 it met and immediately impeached the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

For over a decade the country had endured an almost absolute rule of Church and State by the King and his ministers. To escape it thousands of honest men had emigrated and settled in the colonies. The cup

was now full. With a strong majority and led by able men the House of Commons acted quickly. Strafford and Laud were sent to the Tower; while Finch the Lord Chancellor fled abroad. Early in the new year Strafford was brought to trial; but as the evidence against him was insufficient, and his defence daily gained him friends, it was resolved to attain him. The bill passed easily in the Commons, more hardly in the Lords, and on May 7th it was brought to the King for assent. Charles was celebrating his daughter's wedding to the Prince of Orange and had promised Strafford that in any event his life should be spared; but the arguments of the bishops and judges, the noisy threats of a mob outside Whitehall and the persuasion of the Queen broke his resistance; and on May 9th he yielded. One effort he made to save his minister, sending the Prince of Wales, a lad of ten, with a message to the Lords. It was of no avail; and on May 12th 1641 Strafford was beheaded.

Sweeping measures followed. The courts of Star Chamber and High Commission were abolished, and the dissolution of Parliament was declared illegal without its own consent. In August Charles went off to Scotland but there he found no better fortune, for he was accused of an attempt to kidnap Lord Hamilton and was compelled to admit several of his opponents to the ministry.

In November he returned to London where he got some welcome from the people; but the Commons knew of his intrigues in the north and were determined to press their victory. In the Grand Remonstrance they recapitulated all their complaints, and they now proposed to take the command of the army from the Crown. During their debates crowds from the city surrounded the House at Westminster, cheering their leaders and mobbing the bishops; while the King's partisans flocked to the Palace at Whitehall. The atmosphere was electric: each side declared that its liberties were threatened; and it was clear that a clash must come. On December 29th twelve of the bishops informed the House of Lords that they could no longer attend in Parliament without danger of



their lives. For this the Commons impeached them, and they were committed to the Tower; while it was rumoured that a similar course would be taken against the Queen. Charles replied by ordering the Attorney-General to impeach five of the leading members of Parliament, and as they were not at once confined by the House he sent a serjeant-at-arms to demand their surrender. The answer was that they should be produced at their trial. On January 4th 1642 the King himself walked across from Whitehall to Westminster accompanied by two hundred halberdiers of his guard. Leaving his attendants at the door he entered the House of Commons with his nephew Prince Rupert. There, sitting in the Speaker's chair, he asked if the five members were present. The Speaker humbly replied that he could only answer by leave of the House. Charles glanced round and spoke a few halting words—"that treason knew no privilege, that he saw the birds had flown, that he intended no violence, but that if they were not produced he would find means to get them." He was heard in silence, but as he left the House low cries of "Privilege" arose. The Commons instantly adjourned; committees were set up to guard the five members, who had hidden in the city; and on January 10th preparations were made for their triumphal return to Westminster. They were to be escorted by 2,000 sailors in boats and by the London trainbands with their cannon along the banks. Such a degradation, perhaps such a danger, was too great for Charles to risk; and on that evening he secretly left Whitehall for Hampton Court, taking his family with him.

It was now clear both to King and Parliament that only an appeal to arms could settle their disputes; and accordingly each did its best to collect money and men and to secure the principal fortresses. Hyde, Newcastle and Falkland managed matters for the King; Essex, Fairfax and Cromwell for the Parliament. The King's party or Cavaliers as they came to be called, were chiefly the nobility, the country squires and the inhabitants of the cathedral towns; while the Parliament men or Roundheads

came from the industrial centres, the merchant classes and the yeoman freeholders. Generally speaking the north and west of England were for Charles, while the south and east, and particularly London, stood by the Parliament. The latter, with the navy and the capital at its command, disposed of far more supplies and funds than did the royalists.

On August 22nd 1642 Charles raised the royal standard at Nottingham and marched thence to Shrewsbury. He wrote to Lord Newcastle—"This is to tell you that this Rebellion is grown to that height that I must not look what opinion men ar who at this tyme ar willing and able to serve me. Therefore I doe not only permit but command you to make use of all my loving subjects services without examining ther contienses, more than there loyalty to me, and you shall fynde most to conduce to the uphoulding of my just Regall Power. So I rest Your most assured faithful friend Charles R." \*

Essex, the son of Queen Elizabeth's favourite, was chosen as the Parliamentary general. His troops were good material though not trained, but he had plenty of reserves to draw upon. In October Charles advanced against him, declaring that he only wished to maintain the Protestant faith and to govern according to law. With 18,000 men he met Essex at Edgehill, but through the imprudence of his nephew Rupert, a son of the Elector Palatine, his cavalry was absent at the decisive moment, and Essex was able to avoid a defeat. Charles then lost time in occupying Oxford; when he marched on Brentford the Parliamentary army had outflanked him; and after some *pourparlers* he was compelled to retire.

He passed the winter at Oxford, living at Magdalen or Christ Church and striving to raise loans and to organise his forces. In the spring there were fresh but fruitless negotiations. The Queen, who had been borrowing money and recruiting troops in Holland, then arrived in Yorkshire, and the Commons at once impeached her. They had made a new great seal, had coerced the few

\* Ellis, *Letters*, i., iii. 291.

lords remaining in London, and had taken over the government. During the summer they formed a close alliance with the Scots, both parties binding themselves by the Solemn League and Covenant to pursue the same policy.

In January 1644, in accordance with this agreement, a Scottish army 20,000 strong crossed the border. Charles had called a Parliament at Oxford which was attended by forty peers and a hundred members of the House of Commons. From it he received some supplies, for the financial question had become vital. Newcastle was watching the border, while in the south Charles himself kept marching and counter-marching to elude his enemies. But in July Rupert and Newcastle were beaten at Marston Moor; and the Queen then fled to France.

The autumn dragged on without any marked success on either side. In London the Parliament was divided by the jealousies of Presbyterians and Independents; but they proceeded with the trial of Laud, who was executed in January 1645. In the provinces the King's party was depressed, for the licence of his troops compared ill with the sobriety of the Roundheads. The latter were led by Oliver Cromwell, a Puritan squire of fervent religious belief and practice who had always supported the cause of the people in Parliament. He had made ample use of the news-sheets to promote the claims of liberty, and during the war he had shewn such capacity for command that he had risen to the rank of lieutenant-general. Realising that the weakness of both sides lay in the poor training of their troops he had remedied it by creating a force of disciplined yeomen 'of greater understanding than common soldiers,'\* and gradually he produced an efficient, convinced and spirited army. With this new weapon he signally defeated the royalists at the battle of Naseby in June 1645. During the engagement Charles behaved with gallantry, but he lost 3,000 men, 9,000 stand of arms, his park of artillery, his baggage, and all his private papers. This victory put an end to the war, and for the

\* Trevelyan, 411.

rest of the year Charles moved about the country vainly trying to resume negotiations. At last in May 1646 he fled from Oxford to the Scottish army at Newark where he soon found himself a prisoner; the remnant of his troops then dispersed.

The practical control of Parliament and its army had now been assumed by Cromwell. His military successes and his fearless speech had given him such prominence as a soldier and a statesman that his influence and power rapidly increased. At first the Parliamentary proposals to Charles were moderate: that the command of the army should be given to them and that the state religion should be Presbyterian. But Charles refused point blank: "How can we expect God's blessing" he said "if we abandon the Church:"\* and to similar suggestions made by the Scots, the Queen and his own Council, he was equally averse. This obstinate attitude and a payment of £400,000 from the Parliament in London induced the Scots to hand him over to the English; and in February 1647 he was brought to Holdenby House in Northamptonshire. There he remained an easy prisoner for some months, reading, writing, riding, playing bowls, and making plans. But in June he was suddenly seized and brought to the Parliamentary army under Fairfax. The Parliament and its army had fallen out, and Charles had a chance of resuming his power, for many officers sympathised with him. But when he was taken to Hampton Court he began to treat separately and secretly with the Scots, the Irish and the Presbyterians. Cromwell learnt of his intrigues, and though he was still disposed to maintain the monarchy they deepened his mistrust of Charles. The military officers soon came to terms with Parliament; but a more extreme sect, the Levellers, had arisen; and Charles, genuinely nervous for his safety, took the opportunity of escaping from Hampton Court. His attempt failed, and on his recapture he was lodged in Carisbrooke Castle in the Isle of Wight.

His treatment now changed. Slights were put on

\* Gardiner, ii. 517.

him, money was denied him and a close watch was kept on his actions. He occupied himself with his devotions and with more efforts to escape, and he continued to refuse his assent to any Acts of Parliament. According to Milton he read deeply of Shakespeare, and it was at this time that he is said to have written the *Eikon Basilike*, an account of his sufferings which was in fact probably composed by Bishop Gauden of Exeter: for Charles it did much, being translated into fifty languages.

During the next twelve months Charles remained in custody; and during this time the royalist feeling in the country began to revive. Local risings took place in England; a fresh Scottish army crossed the border; and the young Prince of Wales, who had gone to Holland, appeared in the Downs with a fleet. To meet these dangers Cromwell renewed his offers of a compromise; but on all points which touched his conscience or prerogative Charles was adamant. At last his opponents lost patience and turned to darker designs.

On November 30th 1648 Charles was taken to Hurst Castle and thence to Windsor, and on January 19th 1649 he was brought up to St. James's Palace. During the interval Cromwell had purged the House of Commons of its moderate members and had settled on Charles's death. The business was quickly managed. An ordinance was brought in for constituting a High Court of Justice to try the King for high treason. There were only fifty-three members left in the Commons and twelve in the Lords, and the latter dissented from the bill. The court however was set up, with Sergeant Bradshaw as president and Cromwell among its members. It was but a simulacrum of justice:—"No court" said Sidney "can try the King, and this court can try no man." On January 20th it assembled in Westminster Hall, Bradshaw dressed in a red gown and wearing a shot-proof hat. Charles was brought in and given a chair at the bar. When indicted he at once disputed the competence of his judges. "It is not" he said "my case alone, it is the freedom and liberty of the people

of England; for if power without law may make laws I do not know what subject can be sure of his life or anything that he calls his own." \* There was an attempt to read evidence, but the court grew daily so unpopular that Cromwell determined to finish. Even so he had difficulty in securing the sentence, the Scottish commissioners, the Dutch envoys, and the Assembly of Divines all begging that the King's life should be spared. But Cromwell had made up his mind, and on January 27th 1649 Charles was condemned to death. As he was led away he said "I am not suffered to speak: expect what justice other people will have."

He was taken back to St. James's and four days later, on January 30th 1649, he was publicly beheaded outside the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall, amid the silence of many thousand people. His body was afterwards embalmed and taken to Windsor where it was buried. He was aged forty-eight and had reigned twenty-four years. He left three sons, Charles II, James II and Henry, Duke of Gloucester, with two daughters, one of whom married Prince William of Orange and the other Philip Duke of Orleans. His Queen survived him twenty years.

Although weakly as a child, in later life Charles was exceptionally healthy and strong, his low height being redeemed by a graceful carriage and remarkable dignity of bearing. He was frugal and moderate in food and drink, reasonably fond of sport, attentive to business and his family. But outside his own circle he was not sociable, and he had little vision or tact. His accomplishments were considerable: he spoke and read several languages well, had a good knowledge of the classics, history and law, and a real taste for painting, music and the drama. He drew well and was an admirer and collector of pictures. Rubens called him the best judge of art of any prince of his time; and his galleries at Richmond and Whitehall, which were dispersed by Cromwell after his death and largely bought for Spain, were an incalculable loss to the nation. Charles used to say

\* Gardner, iii. 573.

of himself that he knew so much of arts and manufactures in general that he believed he could get his living by any of them, except weaving in tapestry: that if he had to take to a profession he could not be a lawyer: for he could not defend a bad nor yield in a good cause.\* A stickler for the rules of etiquette and a strict observer of ceremonies, he was orderly, decorous and careful. He had also some lighter interests. He started horse racing at Epsom, he delighted in dancing, and he kept a porter eight feet tall and a dwarf less than a quarter that height.

Clarendon who knew Charles well calls him "tender, compassionate, a great lover of justice, punctual and regular in his devotions, so that on hunting days his chaplains were bound to a very early attendance. A severe exactor of gravity and reverence in all mention of religion, he abhorred all debauchery and anything profane or unclean, and he was a great example of conjugal affection. Not in his nature very bountiful he kept state to the full and did not like strangers nor very confident men. A patient hearer of causes he was very dexterous in mediating. He was very fearless in his person, but in his riper years not very enterprising. He had an excellent understanding but was not confident, which made him oftentimes change his mind for a worse. He was always a great lover of the Scottish and among them no man had such an ascendant over him as Duke Hamilton. He was the best master, the best friend, the best husband and the best Christian that the age produced." † Bishop Warburton however thought his virtues so unsociable as to do him neither service nor credit, his religion overrun with scruples, his natural affections so excessive as to render him a slave to his kin, and his knowledge extensive though not exact.‡

There is a touching record of Charles's last interview with his younger children written by his daughter Elizabeth then aged thirteen. 'He wished her,' he said, 'not to grieve and torment herself for him, for it was a glorious death he

\* Seward i. 282, 287, 300. † Clarendon, *Rebellion*, xi. 354-7.

‡ Seward, i. 301.

should die—it being for the laws and religion of the land. He doubted not but that God would restore the throne to his son.’ Then taking the Duke of Gloucester on his knee he said ‘Sweetheart, now will they cut off thy father’s head. Mark, child, what I say. They will perhaps make thee a King, but thou must not be a King so long as thy brothers Charles and James do live.’ At which the child said earnestly ‘I will be torn in pieces first.’ \*

The plaything of circumstance, counsellors and conscience, an epitome of the domestic virtues but lacking in understanding and statesmanship, Charles I was an example of what a private man might but a prince should not be. At a crucial moment in his country’s history he was called upon to rule it. Elegant, artistic, proud and aristocratic, with an evil descent, a damaging father and disastrous ministers he had to meet Parliaments bitten with Puritanism and self-determination. A rigid believer in his faith and his rights he was anxious to do his duty, but at his accession he fell out with the Commons and he never regained their confidence. When his unfortunate favourites had been killed he replaced them by his even more dangerous wife who easily dominated him. Ten years of strife and tyranny followed, and he then fell back on force, his careless Cavaliers waging an unequal war against the intrepid Ironsides of Cromwell. Lack of discipline and money lost him the war, and compelled to take refuge with his native Scots he was sold by them to the sanctimonious statesmen in London. With these he tried to bargain, but they mistrusted him even more than they did themselves. They were led by a genius, hard, pitiless and determined, who soon made them do his will. At his order Charles fell, losing his crown and his life but preserving his dignity, his dynasty and the loyalty and sympathy of his long-suffering people.

\* Way, 87.



## CHARLES II

1630-1685

CHARLES II, sometimes called the Exile, was born at St. James's Palace on May 29th 1630, the eldest surviving son of Charles I and Henrietta Maria of France. He was baptised by Laud, then Bishop of London; his uncle Louis XIII was his godfather: his nurse was Mrs. Wyndham and his governess Lady Dorchester. At the time of his birth his father had just broken with Parliament, and the Prince's early years were spent in the atmosphere of a thrifty and harassed court. He was "fat and big, but so ugly that his mother was ashamed of him," and for her he had never much affection. As a child he used to insist on sleeping with his arms round a large billet of wood, and he had a distinct will of his own, especially about taking physic. When he was eight Lord Newcastle, a fine gentleman and a dashing soldier, was appointed his governor. His advice to Charles was "to be courteous and civil to everybody, to speak well of everybody, and to be very civil to women, especially great ones." From these precepts his pupil always profited.

At the age of ten Charles took his seat as a peer, and in May 1641 he performed his first public duty, carrying a letter from the King his father to the House of Lords to beg for Strafford's life. Soon afterwards the Civil War broke out, and he was then taken to York and given the nominal command of a troop of lifeguards. His literary education now ceased, and henceforward he was occupied in learning the hard facts of life. He was present with his younger brother James at the battle of Edgehill,



CHARLES II

From the picture by J. M. Wright in the National Portrait Gallery



where he was left by his tutor under a hedge and was nearly captured. After an attack of measles and a short residence at Oxford he was sent to Bristol, as the figurehead of the royalist forces in the west, under the advice of a Council of which Sir Edward Hyde was the moving spirit. Here he began to take a real part in business though not always in a manner approved by Hyde—"for he used to mock at the Council." He had developed early and at thirteen already showed signs of the amorous complexion which was to distinguish him.

As the King's affairs grew worse it was determined to send Charles out of the country; and in March 1646 he went to the Scilly Isles, and six weeks later to Jersey. There he remained for three months and then, leaving Hyde behind, he joined his mother who had taken refuge in Paris. But his position there was by no means pleasant, for Cardinal Mazarin, the chief minister, was determined not to commit himself while affairs in England were undecided. So Charles remained at a loose end, short of money, not getting on with his mother, under the ostensible control of Thomas Hobbes, the philosopher, but really amusing himself with the Duke of Buckingham, a son of his father's former favourite. The attractions of Paris appealed to him, and he soon acquired a pronounced taste for debauchery.

He did not however neglect any chances of helping his father, and in 1648 he took part in a naval attack on the Parliamentary fleet, sailing with a squadron of nineteen sail and capturing some prizes off the mouth of the Thames. He then went to the court of his sister who had married Prince William of Orange, and there he had a severe attack of smallpox. In January 1649 he received the news of his father's trial. He did his best to save him, inducing the Dutch to appeal to Cromwell and sending a blank letter signed by himself to the Parliament. But his efforts were vain. On January 30th 1649 the King was beheaded, and Charles found himself the penniless and exiled head of his house and his three kingdoms.

He was barely nineteen—over six feet tall, ugly,

dark and hairy, with a long nose and large brown eyes; with little education or money, but plenty of wit and capacity. His principal advisers were his mother, an arbitrary Catholic who was always trying to convert him, and Hyde, the titular Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was a punctilious constitutionalist and Anglican. In such surroundings life in Paris lost its charm, and after some cold courtships of Mdle de Montpensier and Mdle de Mancini which they did not encourage, Charles went back to his simpler mistresses in Holland.

His friends in Scotland had meanwhile proclaimed him King, and in 1650 he crossed over to Edinburgh. His chief supporter Montrose had just been beheaded by the Covenanters; so Charles was obliged to conform to their dispensation and that of Argyll. He remained in Scotland for a year, harassed and controlled by Presbyterian divines and rapacious politicians. It was an ignominious position, without comfort or power, and Charles never forgot it. His gaiety and his amours so shocked the local clergy that on one occasion a deputation begged him "to shut his windows when he was amusing himself," at which Charles remarked that "presbytery was not a religion for gentlemen."

In September 1650 Cromwell beat the Covenanters at Dunbar, and on the following New Year's Day Charles was crowned at Scone, being there compelled to abjure his father's acts and his mother's faith. He then collected some troops and in the summer he marched into England, the Parliamentary generals following him at a distance. At Worcester on September 3rd 1651 he was completely defeated by Cromwell. During the fight he behaved with gallantry, leading his cavalry and striving to stem the rout. "I had rather you should shoot me," he cried "than that they should see the sad effect of this day." When all was lost he took to flight, and the next six weeks he spent in the west and south of England, wandering from house to house, loyally served and protected by his friends, though the 'redcoats' were hunting for him and high rewards were offered for his capture.

In later days he never tired of recounting his experiences. At Boscobel he lay for a day in the branches of an oak with his pursuers in the wood beneath him. Escorted by the Penderells he journeyed on foot as a labourer; and he rode many miles with Miss Lane disguised as her groom. During his flight he wore a "leathern doublet with pewter buttons, a pair of old green breeches and a coat of the same, a pair of his own stockings with the tops cut off because embroidered, a pair of old shoes cut and stretched to give ease to his feet, an old grey greasy hat, and a shirt of the coarsest linen, his face and hands being stained with walnut juice." \* Little inured to such toil, tall and heavy, he suffered severely from his feet and from fatigue, but he kept up a cheerful temper and a ready wit, with unfailing courage and resource. In October he crossed the Sussex downs, and looking down from Chanctonbury he said 'This is a country worth fighting for.' At last he reached Brighton where a collier was found to carry him overseas. As the skipper hesitated "we kept him at the inn" said Charles, "and sat up all night with him drinking beer and taking tobacco." †

On October 17th 1651 he arrived at Fécamp and then returned to his mother at St. Germain, where he remained for three years, bored, dependent and impecunious. The French eyed him askance; his own little court was divided; and his chance of regaining his throne seemed almost hopeless. He became taciturn and cynical, kept his own counsel, and lived with a series of ladies; Lady Byron is spoken of about this time as his seventeenth mistress.

In 1654 Mazarin and Cromwell came to terms and Charles was compelled to leave France. Accompanied by his few remaining friends he went to Cologne, where he lived on £240 a year, "without a coach and very indigent" but always amusing and courteous. He used to ride and walk on the walls or spend his time reading and learning languages. Later on he removed to Bruges and in 1658 to Brussels. In September of that year

\* Jesse, iii. 250.

† Boscobel Tracts, 160.

Cromwell died, and Charles's prospects improved. But money was wanting, and after a fruitless journey to Spain to get help there he returned to Breda in Holland. Meanwhile affairs in England were rapidly changing; and Hyde, whom Charles had made Lord Chancellor, and who was his most faithful and wary counsellor, was able to approach General Monk, the commander of the English army. With Monk's support a Convention was called. When it met in the spring of 1660 it was full of royalists, and it immediately invited Charles to return to his dominions. Within a few days half the magnates of England and Holland were begging for audiences at Breda, and he had £50,000 at his disposal.

A squadron of ships were sent over to escort him to England, and on May 25th 1660 he landed near Dover, where he was met by Monk and the whole countryside in an ecstasy of joy. As he stepped ashore he remarked that he had never known he had so many friends. His progress to London was a long triumph, and he arrived at Whitehall on his birthday, determined never to go on his travels again. That night, says Lord Dartmouth, he slept with Lady Castlemaine who was to become the notorious Duchess of Cleveland, the most damaging influence of his reign.

Hyde the Lord Chancellor was now made Earl of Clarendon and chief minister, while Monk was created Duke of Albemarle and appointed Captain-General. Regiments of guards were definitely established and a few of the regicides were hung; but an Act of Indemnity and Oblivion pardoned the bulk of the rebels; disappointed royalists called it 'Indemnity for the King's enemies and Oblivion for his friends.' A year later the coronation was celebrated; and in 1662 Charles married the Infanta Katherine of Portugal. She brought him a valuable dowry, Bombay and Tangier with a large sum of ready money, and she was pleasant and goodtempered; but her lack of beauty and charm and her incapacity to bear children soon restored Charles to his mistresses, whom he chose openly and from every class.

In politics an opportunist, in religion a secret Catholic, Charles now devoted his considerable abilities to keeping the balance even between royalists and republicans, Puritans and Papists, Churchmen and Non-conformists, a none too easy task. There was a general desire to steer clear of either extreme in religion and to accept the Anglican ritual, but the methods meant to enforce it were ill managed. The Act of Uniformity, designed by Parliament to coerce the Independents into episcopacy and by Charles to treat the Catholics gently, drove two thousand Anglican parsons from their benefices and aroused much animosity among the moderate minded; and the King was compelled to withdraw a Declaration of Indulgence by which he tried to over-ride the law. His loose and casual way of life at Whitehall offended and alienated many of his supporters. Parliament became less liberal and more inquisitive, and to get money and liberty Charles began to look abroad. His favourite sister Henrietta had married the Duke of Orleans, and through her he started a correspondence with Louis XIV, who was ready to help him financially in return for his alliance. This policy led to a war with Holland in which some naval victories were gained by Charles's brother, James, Duke of York, who had married Clarendon's daughter and was heir presumptive to the throne. But their effect was discounted by the motive behind them and by a plague and fire which destroyed a large portion of the population and buildings of London. During these calamities Charles behaved well, riding through the burning streets, organising shelters for the people and shewing energy and resource. His ministers however were unpopular. The treasury was empty, and the navy was so largely out of commission that in June 1667 the Dutch fleet was able to sail up the Thames and burn several British men-of-war off Chatham. A general outcry arose, and Clarendon was made the scapegoat. Charles had long tired of his tutelage, Lady Castlemaine hated him and Arlington coveted his place; so the faithful



servant who had brought about the Restoration was driven into exile. He was replaced by a cabal of five lords, of whom Arlington and Ashley were the chief. Catholic in sympathy, corrupt in practice and not very competent, they put little restraint on Charles who was now hand in glove with Louis and ready to bribe, oppose or dissolve his Parliament in return for French money. The Duke of York was an open and the King a secret Papist, and the two brothers did all they could to secure toleration for their faith.

In 1670, by the Treaty of Dover, England and France agreed to make war on Holland, the principal Protestant state on the Continent. The fact that William of Orange, the son of Charles's sister Mary, was being kept out of his place as Stadtholder gave Charles a sufficient excuse. But the war cost so much that he was soon in fresh financial straits. In money matters Charles himself was not extravagant, but his mistresses and his bastards cost him immense sums. The court aped the luxury and manners of Versailles, outraging every shade of opinion by its immorality and atheism, while the feeling against Catholics grew so strong that in 1673 the Test Act was passed forbidding them to hold any public office. The Duke of York then ceased to be Lord High Admiral and the ministers fell; but Danby who now became Lord Treasurer developed a system of parliamentary corruption which brought English politics to their lowest depth. His single popular act was to marry the Duke of York's elder daughter to her Protestant cousin William of Orange.

By 1677 Charles was four millions in debt; and as Parliament would do nothing more to help him he entered into another secret compact with Louis in return for an annuity of £100,000. By this he hoped to tide over his difficulties at home. But the discovery of the so-called Popish Plot roused a fresh passion of anti-papal frenzy; and when in 1679 Charles dissolved Parliament to save Danby from impeachment, a new House of Commons was returned which was much less royalist than

its predecessor. Danby was sent to the Tower; the Duke of York had to go abroad, and the introduction of a bill to exclude him from the throne soon brought about a second dissolution.

The Protestants put forward the Duke of Monmouth, the eldest of Charles's natural sons, as a possible heir to the crown. Feeling ran high; and when the Exclusion Bill passed the Commons, Charles again dissolved the Houses. Bored by this party strife he then retired to Oxford and in March 1681 summoned a Parliament there. But it also introduced an Exclusion Bill and was dissolved within five days of its meeting. By now however public sympathy had veered round; and Charles who had recently been indisposed was able to recall his brother. Two years later the Rye House Plot, a conspiracy to kill the King and the Duke of York and involving Monmouth and several of the opposition further benefited Charles. The Tories gained complete control of the government: a number of Whigs were executed, and there was a royalist reaction. James was re-appointed Lord High Admiral; Monmouth fled to Holland, and Charles at last found himself at peace. But early in 1685 he fell ill of apoplexy combined with some internal complaint, and four days later, on February 6th, he died. He met his end with cheerful courage and decorum, apologising to his attendants for being so long in dying and secretly receiving the rites of the Catholic Church. He was nearly fifty-five and had reigned twenty-four years: he was buried at Westminster. He left no legitimate issue but about twelve natural children, many of whom he had made peers. His wife survived him thirty years, part of which she spent as Regent of Portugal.

Charles II was by birth the most foreign prince who had sat on the throne of England for several centuries, his four grandparents being a Scot, a Dane, a Frenchman and an Italian. This his appearance shewed. His face was dark and heavy with a saturnine expression, though full of character. "Is that like me?" he once said on

seeing a painting of himself "Then, oddsfish, I must be an ugly fellow." His manners were considered perfect, for he combined good humour and sociability with dignity and breeding. Naturally indolent he could undergo fatigue and privation when necessary. He knew French well, Italian slightly and during his exile he had read considerably: "but his reading tended to his pleasures more than to his instruction." \*

For music and the arts he had some taste, with a good knowledge of the drama. He danced and played tennis and pall mall, ran his horses on Putney Heath and at Newmarket, hunted a little and walked a great deal, sauntering with his spaniels being his favourite pursuit.

His Dogs would sit at Council-Board  
Like Judges in their Furs;  
We question much who had most Sense,  
The Master or the Curs.†

He used to say that England was the most comfortable climate to live in, as there were more days in the year and more hours in the day in which a man could take exercise out of doors than in any other country he had ever known.‡ To his family he was affectionate and kind, and in a court addicted to both he neither gambled nor drank. When he had any money to spare he was singularly generous to his friends: he was the founder of Chelsea Hospital. Business he could carry through with acumen and despatch, but he hated it, so he said, like the devil. He was interested in yachting, ship-building, chemistry and physics, and was largely responsible for the foundation of the Royal Society. He appreciated men of character; Hobbes, Evelyn, Temple and Ken were among his friends, and he was happy in nearly any society.

Mild, easy, humble, studious of our good,  
Inclin'd to mercy, and averse from blood.

For women his appetite was unrestrained, and he assessed their souls at an even lower rate than their bodies: "his inclinations to love were with as little of

\* Halifax, 5.    † State Poems, ii. 407.    ‡ Seward, ii. 1.

the Seraphick as ever man had." \* He was sixteen when his first child was born. During his exile his most famous mistress was Lucy Walters or Barlow, whom he is said to have married and who became the mother of Monmouth. Evelyn describes her as "brown, beautiful and bold, but insipid." † Her tastes were so catholic that Charles pensioned her off before leaving Holland.

At the Restoration Lady Castlemaine became his principal flame. She bore him a large family including the Dukes of Grafton, Cleveland and Northumberland. A strapping and imperious beauty, "the finest woman in the kingdom," the quean of any who rose to her fees, she was as greedy of money as of power. She did Charles immense harm and caused much of his unpopularity. Not until 1670 could he get rid of her, and she then went off to France, returning after his death to continue her amours until her own decease in 1709. Her successor was a Frenchwoman, Louise de Kerouaille, afterwards Duchess of Portsmouth and mother of the Duke of Richmond. She arrived in 1670 in the train of Charles's sister, the Duchesse d'Orléans, and her looks and wit soon enslaved him. A far cleverer woman than her predecessor and equally ambitious she damaged her royal lover even more, for her influence with him was enormous and she worked incessantly for France. Another foreign figure was Cardinal Mazarin's niece, Hortense Mancini, for whose hand Charles had been a candidate when he was in exile. But though rich, graceful and amusing, her vile temper made her count for less than her colleagues.

The remaining houris whose favours Charles enjoyed had less political importance. The best known were Mary Davis "an impertinent slut," and Nell Gwynne, a vivacious orange girl and actress of Drury Lane, who used to entertain him with concerts and little breakfasts and who became the mother of the Duke of St. Albans. She it was who when hooted in Hyde Park in mistake for the Duchess of Portsmouth put her head out of the coach window and said 'No, no good people, I am the English

\* Halifax, 17.

† Evelyn, i. 2, 39.

whore not the French one.' "*La belle Stuart*" seems to have been one of the very few who resisted the King's advances until after her marriage. During his pursuit of this lady Charles "*le moins violent de tous les hommes*"\* nearly threw his rival, the Duke of Richmond (not the one who was his son), out of a window into the Thames.

But despite the number of his mistresses Charles was more their slave than their dupe, and though he treated them well he put little trust in them. 'He had more properly a good stomach than any real passion for them.'† "*Il avoit l'esprit agréable, l'humeur douce et familière*"‡ says Hamilton; and the wish to do and say whatever was easiest at the moment landed him in difficulties from which he had neither the wish nor the energy to escape. "He bore indignities and insolence from concubines who, while they owed everything to his bounty, caressed his courtiers almost before his face."§ "All he sought was to enjoy a lazy thoughtless ease, in constant debauchery of amours and in the pleasures of wit and laughter with the most worthless abandoned vicious men."|| He had sense enough to suspect and not to care.

His memory and his powers of observation were excellent, though his stories were remarkable for their ribaldry. He was affable, familiar and never illnatured, but as he grew older he became prolix. He used to repeat his adventures after the Battle of Worcester so often and in such detail that Lord Rochester once said to him that he could hardly imagine how a man with such a memory could forget that he had told the same tales to the same people several times on the same day.¶ But compared with his brother Charles was the delight and paragon of his court. "They will never kill me" he said to James, "to make you King." In essentials he judged men well. His nephew William of Orange he said was 'an honest man,' but his nephew-in-law George of Denmark 'had nothing in him' whether drunk or sober.'

\* Grammont, 306.

† Grammont, 80.

|| Burnet, iv. 528.

† Halifax, 18.

§ Macaulay, i. 209.

¶ *Ibid.*, ii. 468.

Full of humour, coarse and apparently sceptical Charles was yet deeply concerned about religion. The Scots had disgusted him with their dogma, but the Catholics caught him; and it is probable that he was already a convert to their faith at the Restoration. With a strong vein of melancholy, critical and reflective, he had a clear understanding of his political position. He realised the errors of both his parents and saw that he must walk warily; but he regarded Parliaments, like Presbyterians, as a nuisance, and he felt justified in fooling either as much as he could. The vicissitudes of his career, his privations and rebuffs abroad, followed by the almost idolatrous worship of his subjects at home made him a *pococurante* and a sybarite. So he used his ministers as he did his mistresses, flung himself into pleasures which distracted him and replaced his old servants by harpies and sycophants. His people never refused him their love, but his Parliaments gradually ceased to trust him, for his administration, conducted by bribes and chicanery, was as suspect as his policy and his faith. With a Catholic mother, wife and heir, and with several Catholic ministers, he copied the French whom he admired; and the example of Louis, the needs of his duchesses, and the opposition of the Commons encouraged him to model his government on that of his patron in Paris—divine right, direct rule, favourites, loans and expediency. Plague, fire, plots, defeats and debts only confirmed his cynicism, and he carried on in comparative comfort until he left his crown to the worst possible successor at the worst possible moment.

Shrewd, insouciant and debonair, a modern *Roi d'Yvetot*, he was the natural reaction to the hated rule of Cromwell; but though he was a bad King and an immoral man, his engaging personality and his romantic history appealed to a nation which was tired of psalm singing and penitence. With a legitimate son, more principle and less capacity he might have revived the rule of the Tudors and staved off the Glorious Revolution.

## JAMES II

1633-1701

JAMES II was born at St. James's Palace on October 15th 1633, the second surviving son of King Charles I by Henrietta Maria of France. He was christened by the Archbishop of Canterbury and immediately proclaimed Duke of York, though the title was not conferred on him by patent until some years later. As a child he lived in London with his sister Elizabeth and his brothers Charles, Prince of Wales, and Henry Duke of Gloucester.

Early in 1642, at the beginning of the Civil War, James was taken by Lord Hertford to join the King at York, and he was then made a Knight of the Garter. He was present with his brother Charles at the battle of Edgehill where he was left in a field and nearly killed by a round shot. He was afterwards brought to Oxford where he remained until its surrender in 1646, when he was taken prisoner by the Parliamentary generals. In his memoirs he observes that "Fairfax was the one of all the officers who kissed not the Duke's hand: for as yet they had not banished all appearance of respect for the Royal family. Yet none of them were so ceremonious as to kneel, excepting only Cromwell, the Lieutenant General." \* Escorted by Sir George Ratcliffe, who took away his favourite dwarf, James was brought to London, where with his younger brother and sister he was placed under the care of Lord Northumberland. For over a year he remained at St. James's Palace, being allowed to visit his father on several occasions. Plans were made by the royalists for his escape, but the first attempt was discovered through one

\* Life of James II, i. 29.



JAMES II

IN 1685

From the picture by Sir G. Kneller in the National Portrait Gallery





of his letters being intercepted. He records how he had just time to hide the cypher "when there came to him a committee of both Houses, two Lords and four Commoners, who were sent to examine him. They began by shewing him the letter, which he could not deny to be his own handwriting; and they then asked him for the cypher, to which he answered 'That he had burnt it.' They pressed him exceedingly to discover who had been assisting him to escape, but found him so very reserved that he would acknowledge nothing, though they urged the danger he ran of being sent prisoner to the Tower; but when they saw that none of their artifices could prevail they left him." \*

In April 1648 his efforts were successful. "After supper he went to play at Hide and Seek in company of his Brother and Sister. He had used to hide himself in places so difficult to find that more commonly they were half an hour in searching for him." This half-hour he gained, and "slipping down by a paire of back stairs into the garden" and thence into the park, he drove in a hackney coach to a house near the river. There he put on a girl's clothes and was taken down the Thames in a barge. But on embarking, the master suspected him, "for peeping through a cranny of the door into the barge room, he perceived his Royall Highness laying his leg upon the table in so unwomanish a manner that he concluded his surmises were truths." † He was prevailed on however to continue with the enterprise; and James arrived safely at The Hague, where he was entertained by his sister the Princess of Orange. A few months later he joined his mother in Paris, and he accompanied Charles on his naval expedition against the Parliamentary fleet in the following summer. For some years he then moved about between Jersey, St. Germain, Brussels and Breda. Although in considerable financial straits he was popular at the French court "being greatly esteemed by all for his comeliness and personal dexterity in his behaviour and exercises." ‡

\* Life of James II, i. 32.    † *Ibid.*, i. 32.    ‡ Evelyn, iv. 344.

By 1652 James was nineteen, tall and fair haired, much better looking than his brother Charles and quite as active and graceful. Tired of doing and earning nothing he made up his mind to become a soldier, and having with difficulty got permission from his brother and mother "he borrowed three hundred pistolets from a Gascon and with a sett of Poland coach horses fitted himself out for the campaign." \* With a small following he joined the army of Marshal Turenne, and on his first campaign he showed ability and courage. Being able by his name to attract various troops of English and Irish volunteers he was allowed by Cardinal Mazarin to form a regiment, and during the war of the Fronde he so distinguished himself by his gallantry that in 1655 he was appointed lieutenant-general and left for a time in command of an army. But the conclusion of peace took away his employment, so after refusing a post in Italy he accepted one under the Spaniards in Flanders, where he risked his life on several occasions and again displayed considerable capacity and enterprise.

The death of Cromwell in September 1658 greatly improved the position of the exiled Stuart family. James joined his brother at Breda, and while there he contracted a secret marriage with Anne Hyde, a daughter of the Lord Chancellor, afterwards Earl of Clarendon. She had been attached to the household of the Princess of Orange, and James had met her some time before in Paris. "There," in his own words, "he fell in love with her, she having witt and other qualittys, and overmastered by his passion gave her a promise." † At first the Queen and the Chancellor opposed the alliance, but they eventually agreed to it, and Anne made her husband a good wife.

Early in 1660 James was offered the post of High Admiral of Spain and he was just setting off for that country when the events leading to the Restoration began. Within a few weeks Charles was invited to return to England; and a deputation of lords and commoners then brought James a present of £10,000. He was

\* King James II, i. 54.

† *Ibid.*, i. 54.

appointed Lord High Admiral of England and assumed command of the squadron that took the King to Dover. On his arrival in London an income of £21,000 a year was settled on him by Parliament, and his marriage was publicly announced. It made a poor impression, but the new duchess had tact and learnt to manage her husband, "making up what she wanted in birth by her other endowments." \* Hitherto James's morals had compared favourably with those of his brother, but he now began to turn his attentions to various ladies, not always with secrecy or success. "During service in the Chapel Royal" says Pepys "the Duke and Mrs. Palmer did talk to one another very wantonly through the hangings;" † while another of James's flames, Lady Denham, "declared she would not be his mistress like Miss Price, to go up and down the Privy Stairs, but would be owned publicly." ‡

James lived at St. James's Palace, which he shared with his brother's mistresses, and he applied himself conscientiously to his public duties. He became an active member of the Privy Council and gave real attention to the navy, remodelling the Admiralty Board and issuing the first General Instructions. But he could not remedy lack of funds. His own money he managed badly, for he had little idea of economy, and his personal finances were always low. To increase them he became Governor of the African Company, and his commercial ventures disposed him to hostilities with the Dutch, the principal trade rivals of the English. When in 1665 war was declared against the Netherlands James took command of the fleet. On June 3rd he engaged the Dutch Admiral Opdam off Lowestoft and defeated him, behaving with sense and gallantry throughout the fight; but at eleven o'clock at night, when he had gone to lie down in his cabin, one of his equerries ordered the flag captain to slacken sail, and in consequence the Dutch squadron escaped. For this victory Parliament voted James £12,000.

James was still fairly popular, though he was not

\* King James II, i. 388. † Pepys, i. 114. ‡ *Ibid*, ii. 392.

very friendly with the King, his military successes and the fact that he had children and his brother had not, being suggested as the cause. In the Fire of London he shewed diligence and presence of mind "riding up and down the City to keep all quiet, he being now generall; he had no little share of the toyle and danger, exposing himself day and night." \*

In 1667, when the Dutch were again threatening hostilities, James strove to get money from Parliament for fortifying the coast, and he strongly advocated sending the fleet to sea—but the Council preferred to economise. In consequence a Dutch squadron burnt several English ships in the Medway, and as a result Clarendon, the Lord Chancellor, was dismissed and exiled. James, who was laid up with smallpox at the time, did his best to save his father-in-law, but the King was obdurate, and he had to submit. His vogue was on the wane, for his constant debts, his methods of living, and the suspicion that he was a Papist had brought him into odium. In 1670 he fell seriously ill and in the following year he lost his wife. She died a confessed Catholic, and James himself then publicly joined the Roman Church.

In 1672 a third war began with the Dutch. James won another victory over their fleet off Southwold, his flagship the Prince being put out of action. But his naval successes were quite overshadowed by his religion; and in 1673 the Test Act precluded Catholics from holding any office. James accordingly resigned his place as Lord High Admiral, for "he would not be moved in his resolution of not going against his conscience." †

At this time the wishes of Louis XIV were almost law in England, and at his suggestion a new wife was now found for James. A sister of the Duke of Tuscany had been thought of, but the lady chosen was Mary daughter of Alfonso IV, Duke of Modena. She was only fifteen, dark, handsome and full of charm, but so innocent that "she had never heard of England nor of the Duke of York." ‡ She was married to James by proxy on

\* Life of James II, i. 424.

† *Ibid.*, i. 483.

‡ *Ibid.*, i. 485.

September 30th 1673, and her arrival in England brought about fresh attacks by Parliament on the French, the Catholics and the duke. Charles evaded the storm, but his brother had to bear it, and the next seven years of James's life were difficult. A genuine convert and unwilling to disown his belief, he was yet anxious to play his part in public affairs. But he had to absent himself from the Council; the education of his children was taken from him; and though he behaved with discretion there was always a strong opposition against him. Among its leaders were Shaftesbury, a powerful demagogue, and Monmouth, the King's eldest illegitimate son, who was put up as the protagonist of the Protestants. Constant efforts were made to induce James to recant, but though he consented to the marriage of his daughter Mary with his nephew William of Orange, the Protestant ruler of the Netherlands, he firmly refused to abjure or to conceal his own faith.

Matters gradually grew worse. The exchequer and the fleet were in an equally bad state, political morality was at its lowest ebb, and Parliament was swayed by bigotry and bribes. The so-called Popish Plot damaged James's position still further, for some of his private correspondence about reconverting England was published, and in 1679 he had again to leave England for The Hague. These were what he used to call 'his years of vagabondage.' The Commons then passed the Exclusion Bill, a measure to prevent his succeeding to the crown, though this the King defeated by dissolving Parliament. In August of that year Charles had some fits of ague, and being nervous of his health he let James return. Monmouth and Shaftesbury still opposed him; but his careful conduct through a critical time had brought about a slight reaction in his favour, and he was now sent as High Commissioner to Scotland. Yet people were so nervous of entertaining him that when he put up at Hatfield on his way to the north he found the house empty, though some venison had been left for him on the kitchen table.

In Scotland James remained some months governing

the country with firmness and moderation and not, as is often said, with cruelty. But his enemies were active; and during the next two years he was recalled to London, sent back to Scotland, banished again and eventually in 1682 allowed to return to England. He was then definitely reconciled to the King, while Monmouth and Shaftesbury fled abroad. The Rye House Plot brought the trimmers over to the Tories' side; and the marriage of James's second daughter Anne to Prince George of Denmark, another Protestant, further conciliated public opinion. By 1684 he had resumed his place at the Admiralty and his seat in the Council; and when in February 1685 Charles died James succeeded to the throne without question or delay.

He began his reign well, making a temperate speech to the Council and appointing his brothers-in-law Rochester and Clarendon, Treasurer and Privy Seal respectively, with Halifax, another moderate man, as Lord President. Difficulties however soon arose. At the coronation the Anglican rites were curtailed. The King daily attended mass at the Queen's chapel in the palace. Severe measures were enforced against Scottish recusants, and privileged posts were given to Irish Papists. The Whigs and the Protestants grew uneasy. In May a slight rebellion took place in Scotland, and in June Monmouth crossed over with some mercenaries from the Netherlands, landed in the west of England and proclaimed himself King. He was joined by some Puritan yeomen and shopkeepers, but the army and the country stood solidly by James. Monmouth was defeated at Sedgemoor, captured, tried and beheaded; and in the subsequent raids and assizes Colonel Kirke and Chief Justice Jeffreys dealt drastically with his adherents. By the autumn James seemed secure.

He was now a man of fifty-two and for twelve years he had suffered constant tribulations for his faith. Triumphant over his enemies on more than one occasion he had acquired all the enthusiasm of a convert; and his experiences convinced him that Providence was on his

side. So he began to proselytise and to persecute, for he was bold, he had a busy nature and he was a bigot.

In November 1685 his first Parliament met. It was thoroughly royalist, ready to support prerogative and privilege, though not the Pope. James at once showed his hand. He told them that he proposed to keep on foot the army raised for the suppression of Monmouth's rebellion, he demanded grants for its pay, and he adhered to the illegal appointment of Catholic officers. When the Houses in London and Edinburgh showed their opposition he dissolved them: Halifax and the moderates were dismissed from the Council, and the business of state was committed to a cabinet consisting of the King, Lord Sunderland and Father Petre, a Jesuit priest.

Full of energy and determination James devoted himself to the general administration of the country and particularly to that of his army, 30,000 strong, which he kept in a standing camp on Hounslow Heath and continually visited. Developing his religious policy, he issued dispensations from the Test Act and appointed Catholics as justices of the peace, members of the Privy Council, bishops and heads of colleges. In July 1686 the court of High Commission was revived amid gloomy recollections and fears. By October the palace was deserted. At Christmas the King opened a Catholic chapel at Whitehall, in April 1687 he issued a Declaration of Indulgence, and in July he publicly received the Papal Nuncio at Windsor. During the autumn he continued his campaign, dismissing the Protestant lords lieutenant and endeavouring by every means to convert individual noblemen to his faith. He went to Oxford; and at Christ Church touched for the King's Evil, heard a priest say mass and gave the vice-chancellor advice about preaching and printing. Then he sent for the fellows of Magdalen, who had refused to elect his nominee as their president, and rated them soundly. "You have not dealt with me like gentlemen. You have been unmannerly as well as undutiful. Is this your Church of England loyalty? Go home, get you gone. I am the



King. I will be obeyed. Go to your chapel this instant and admit the Bishop of Oxford !”

In April 1688 he issued a second Declaration of Indulgence, which he ordered to be read in all churches on two successive Sundays. Sancroft the Primate with six other bishops petitioned against it, whereupon James sent them to the Tower and indicted them for rebellion. In June the Queen had a son, an heir to the throne, to whom the Pope was asked to be godfather. This so confounded the Whigs that tales were at once spread about of the child having been smuggled into the palace in a warming pan, despite the fact that over sixty persons had been present in the Queen's bedroom when it was born. On June 30th the seven bishops were acquitted by a jury at Westminster amid scenes of wild rejoicing; and on the same day a letter was secretly signed by several leading Whig and Tory lords inviting William of Orange to come over and free the kingdom from tyranny.

The position of the Prince of Orange was strong. He was the only son of James's eldest sister, the husband of his eldest daughter, and the principal Protestant on the Continent. He was also a distinguished and popular general. During the fights over the Exclusion Bill he had been suggested by Charles II as Regent during James's reign, and hitherto his wife had been the presumptive heiress to the English crown. Since James's accession the relations between him and his nephew had become strained. William, whose interests were wrapped up in Holland, suspected James of forming an alliance with France against him; while James had just withdrawn from the Netherlands six English regiments which he maintained there and had sent them to France. Louis XIV had recently revoked the Edict of Nantes which protected the French Huguenots, and thousands of them were now pouring over to England—living examples of French or Catholic tyranny. At this moment came the birth of the Prince of Wales who would oust William's wife from the succession and who was, it was

said, supposititious. It was followed by the English invitation to William.

William was a good Protestant, a keen soldier and an ardent enemy of the French: he was also a capable and ambitious man, and to preserve the integrity of Holland he would risk anything. During the summer he collected troops and transports. This made James nervous, and on Michaelmas Day 1688 he pardoned all Protestants by proclamation. Almost at the same time William issued a declaration of his intention to come and rescue England.

James at once began to make concessions on all sides, cancelling his Catholic appointments, restoring the Protestant bishops and heads of colleges, and changing his ministers. He put the ports into a state of defence and raised the navy and army to a war footing. But the country was looking for William's arrival, and "Lillibulero," a song sung widely in the London streets, called openly for "a Protestant wind." During October the weather prevented William sailing; but early in November he eluded the English fleet and landed without opposition at Torbay. Advancing slowly through the west country he was joined in increasing numbers by the Whig lords and squires; while desertions from the royal army began apace.

On November 19th James arrived at Salisbury to take command of his troops. There Lord Churchill, one of his principal commanders, the Duke of Grafton, his nephew, and Prince George of Denmark, his son-in-law, successively left him. Distrusting the spirit of his men he returned to London only to hear that his daughter Anne had also fled. He summoned a Council of peers and bishops, promised still further concessions and then issued writs for a new Parliament. Meanwhile he sent commissioners to Hungerford to treat with William; but the terms they brought back required him to abjure the Catholic religion, and rather than do this he determined to flee. After sending off his wife and infant son to France he left Whitehall secretly in the night

of December 11th, dropping the great seal into the Thames as he crossed it at Vauxhall. But at Sheerness, while hiding on a barge, he was found by a rabble of fishermen and brought ashore. He was then escorted to Rochester where he remained a few days, William still hoping that he would go off to France. On December 16th however James came back to Whitehall, held a Council, attended mass and dined in public. William who was now established at Windsor felt that no more time must be lost, and at his orders James was sent back to Rochester. There on December 23rd 1688 he at last boarded a lugger in the Medway and made his way over to France. This was the end of his reign.

At St. Germain he was received by Louis XIV with every honour, a palace, a guard and a revenue being assigned for his maintenance. In London a Convention met and, after publishing the Declaration of Right, it resolved that James had abdicated the crown and offered it to William and Mary. In February 1689 they were crowned.

James however was not yet beaten. He set up a rival government at St. Germain, despatched envoys to the principal foreign states and prepared to fight his daughter and son-in-law. In March he crossed over to Ireland with an expedition financed by Louis, and for sixteen months he remained in that country. At first he was received with some enthusiasm. He called a Parliament at Dublin, adopted a number of Catholic measures under the guise of toleration, and did his best to enlist the aid of the Scots. But he had no money, his troops were ill-disciplined and he gained little success. In the summer Marshal Schomberg arrived from England and kept him on the defensive; and in the spring William himself followed and in a short campaign completely defeated him on July 1st 1690 at the Battle of the Boyne. During this engagement James showed less than his former courage and decision, and he got little sympathy from his French or Irish levies. When he saw that the day was lost he rode off to Dublin and thence to Kinsale

where he took ship to France. Two years later he planned an invasion of England from Brest; but off La Hogue the French fleet was defeated in his sight by an English squadron, and this put an end to his project. Preparations for a third expedition also failed, while a plot to murder William was discovered; and after these mishaps James limited himself to political efforts, soliciting foreign alliances and intriguing with the Jacobites in England, including some of William's own ministers. He wrote occasionally to his daughter Anne, but with Mary he would have no correspondence, and when she died in 1694 he forbade his court to put on mourning.

At last, when it was clear that James would not regain his throne, Louis concluded the Peace of Ryswick and recognised William III as King of England. This put an end to James's hopes, for without French aid he was helpless. His disappointments undermined his health and for the rest of his life he devoted himself to religion. Henceforward fasts and penances occupied most of his time, and occasionally he lived in a retreat. He wrote memoirs and tracts, hunted, and entertained a court of priests and exiles at St. Germain; but as a factor in Europe he had ceased to count. He was indeed offered the crown of Poland, but he refused it, as he still hoped to regain his own. During these years he shewed so much zeal, piety and meekness that after his death the question of his canonisation was considered by the Vatican.

Early in 1701 he was attacked by paralysis and six months later, on September 6th 1701, he died. He was almost sixty-eight and had reigned three years. His last words to his son were 'never to put the crown of England into competition with his eternal salvation.' He was buried in the church of St. Edmund at St. Germain, but at the French Revolution his bones were dispersed. His wife survived until 1718 living on the bounty of the French, a model of charity and devotion.

By his two wives James had fifteen children, of whom James, styled the Old Pretender and the Chevalier St. George, Anne and Louisa alone survived him. The first

of these had two sons, Charles Edward, styled the Young Pretender, and Henry, Cardinal of York. On the death of the latter in 1807 the whole legitimate issue of James II became extinct. His natural children by Arabella Churchill were the Dukes of Berwick and Albemarle and Lady Waldegrave, and by Katherine Sedley a daughter who married first Lord Anglesey and afterwards Sheffield Duke of Buckingham.

James was a tall, handsome man with considerable grace and dignity. He had good manners, spoke French well and knew Latin sufficiently. He had little humour and few pleasures, even his mistresses being 'given him for a penance'; but he took an interest in racing, and Pepys calls him "a desperate huntsman." As a child his education had been neglected, but as a young man he worked so hard at his profession that Turenne said that he was like to be the greatest general of his time.\* After the Restoration he applied himself diligently to naval matters and "brought the fleet entirely into his dependance," and though he managed his own income badly with public monies he was careful and honest. His successes at sea were largely due to his good tactics and confidence, for he was a firm believer in the bravery of his sailors. In 1690 when told that an English squadron had been defeated by the French he observed "It is the first time"; and during the sea fight off La Hogue when he saw his French allies beaten he said mournfully "None but my brave English could fight so gallantly."†

He was more religious and less immoral than his brother Charles, but both in his virtues and his vices he was without attraction: "he took a gloomy pleasure in diverting his body and his mind."

Bishop Burnet, who disliked him, calls him "a man esteemed of great courage in the former parts of his life and of great application to business, but with no vivacity of thought, invention or experience. He had a good judgment where his religion or education gave him not a bias, which it did very often. He was bred with strange

\* Burnet, iii. 5.

† Jesse, Stuarts, 422.

notions of the obedience due to princes and came to take up strange ones of the submission due to priests. He was naturally a man of truth, fidelity and justice; but his religion was so infused in him and he was so managed by his priests that everything gave way to Church concerns. He was a gentle master and had no personal vices but of one sort, wandering from one woman to another, yet he had a real sense of sin and was ashamed of it. In a word if it had not been for his popery he would have been a good prince.\* Speaker Onslow thought him "a far better man than his brother though of a far inferior understanding."

James was a man of more gravity than wit and more industry than capacity; "Charles" it was said "could understand if he would, James would if he could." In argument he was unfortunate. Just after his accession he was going to mass in the Queen's chapel; the Duke of Norfolk, a Protestant, who was carrying the sword of state, halted at the door. James said, "My lord, your father would have gone further:" Norfolk replied "Your Majesty's father would not have gone so far." When James received the Papal Nuncio, the Duke of Somerset refused to attend. "Are you not aware" asked the King "that I am above the law?" "Your Majesty may be," said Somerset "but I am not." On another occasion he enquired of the Spanish ambassador if the Kings of Spain did not consult their confessors on matters of State. "Yes, Sir," said the ambassador, "and that is why our affairs go awry."†

His methods of making love were unusual. Hamilton, who gives a list of his mistresses, says that he would play to them on a guitar or talk for hours about hounds, horses and hunting, until everyone fell asleep.‡

With a narrow intellect and a strong sense of duty James's conversion had so hardened him that unlike his French grandfather he was ready to sacrifice three kingdoms for a mass, for in affairs he was a bungler.

\* Burnet, iv. 527-8.

† Jesse, Stuarts, 341-3.

‡ Grammont, 115, 157.

Yet his character has hardly received justice. He was brave and according to his own lights honest, an active upholder of British prestige in peace and war, loyal to his country, his brother and his faith. Like his father he was arbitrary and obstinate, unable to gauge the feelings of his people, incapable of profiting by example, unwilling to rule as a constitutional King. But his stupidity in not concealing his designs saved England from evils far greater than those it suffered in his short and ill-starred reign, for his fortunate folly gave it a Protestant dynasty, a democratic constitution and responsible government.







### WILLIAM III

AT THE BATTLE OF THE BOYNE

From the picture by J. van Wyck in the National Portrait Gallery

## WILLIAM III

1650-1702

WILLIAM HENRY of Nassau, Prince of Orange and Stadtholder of the Netherlands, afterwards William III of England, was born at The Hague on November 4th 1650, the only and posthumous child of William II of Orange by *Mary Stuart* eldest daughter of Charles I. The family of Nassau was of German origin, descended from the Dukes of Burgundy from whom they had inherited a small *principality on the Rhone*, but for a century they had resided in the Netherlands where three of their chiefs in succession had been chosen as Stadtholder or military leader of the States General of the United Provinces. In that capacity they had withstood and defeated the powers of Spain and Rome, and their name had thus become identified with the cause of Protestantism in Europe.

“The race of Nassau was by heaven designed  
To curb the proud oppressors of mankind  
To bind the tyrants of the earth with laws  
And fight in every injured nation's cause.”

William's father had died a week before his birth, at a moment when the States General under the Grand Pensioner John de Witt had just taken away the Stadtholder's power. For some time peace had been the watchword of the States, war that of the royal family, and while the former had been growing yearly in wealth, the latter was heavily in debt.

The tendencies of the country were republican, and William's connection with Stuarts did not help him; though the loyalty of the Dutch to his house carried

him safely through childhood. So strong indeed was the feeling for him that he was nearly named Captain General of Holland at the age of three; and a year later Cromwell made it a condition of his treaty with the States that neither William nor his descendants should ever be appointed to the chief command of their armies or fleets.

The young prince had plenty of enemies, de Witt not the least among them; and little care was lavished on his education. As a boy he remained with his mother, and he thus learned to speak English with facility, though always with a foreign accent. At Leyden he was exceptionally industrious, devoting himself to languages so that he was soon proficient in French, German, Spanish, Italian and Latin. His earliest companions were Philip Stanhope and William Bentinck; and hunting was his single recreation. Knowing the history of his race he realised the uncertainty of his position, and he prepared himself for his career by temperance, economy and silence. One of his uncles was the Elector Frederick William of Prussia, another Charles II of England, and with both he kept on good terms, so that even in his youth the French extolled his dissimulation. In 1667 de Witt was obliged to admit him to the Council of State; and a year later William took his seat as Margrave of Flushing in the diet of the States of Zealand.

He was very slight and short but of a fine figure and dignity. Thin and brown haired, with a clear and delicate complexion, large pathetic eyes and a broad forehead, he had a Roman eagle nose and a countenance composed to gravity and authority.\* Sir William Temple, the English envoy in the Netherlands, calls him "a young man of more parts than ordinary, good plain sense with agreeable humour and disposition, without any vice. He is asleep by ten o'clock, loves hunting as much as he hates swearing, and prefers weak ale before any wine."†

William's place, his name and the promise of his future

\* Burnet, O.T., iv, 547.

† Jesse, i. 19.

had already made him a figure in Europe; and in 1670 he was invited to England by his uncle Charles II. He already had it in mind to marry his cousin Mary, a daughter of the Duke of York; but his stay at Whitehall was short. Charles warned him against his Dutch block-heads; the Puritans admired his religious devotion and the two Universities gave him honorary degrees. Reresby in his diary says "The Prince of Orange being at this time come into England to pretend to the Lady Mary, the King received him both on account of his relation and merit, being a very personable and hopeful prince, with great splendour. Amongst other of his entertainments the King made him drink very hard one night at a supper given by the Duke of Buckingham. The Prince did not naturally like it, but being once entered was more frolic and merry than the rest of the company; amongst other expressions of it he broke the windows of the chamber of the maids of honour and had got into some of their apartments had they not been timely rescued. I suppose his mistress did not less approve him for that vigour." \*

On this occasion William's proposal came to nothing, and he returned a bachelor to the Hague. Two years later France and England declared war against Holland, and despite the opposition of de Witt and the peace party William was appointed Captain-General of the Dutch forces. His first campaign was not fortunate. The English fleet under the Duke of York beat the Dutch, while the French troops were so superior to his own in numbers, equipment and leading that William had to withdraw from the line of the Yssel and evacuate the border provinces. But the loyalty of his people and the courage of his men upheld him, and he was now formally elected Stadtholder of the United Provinces. The de Witts were blamed for their parsimony in reducing the strength of the national forces and shortly afterwards they were murdered; a Grand Pensioner was then chosen who was a strong supporter of the royal house. At the age of twenty-two William thus found himself in the

\* Reresby, 82.

seat of his ancestors and he soon shewed his talents as a soldier and a statesman. He formed one alliance with the Emperor, another with the Elector and a third with the King of Spain. In 1673 he saved Amsterdam and in the following year he definitely checked the conquests of the French. Charles sent over envoys to mediate, and they told William that in the end Holland must be beaten. 'No,' said William, 'there is one way to avoid seeing it lost, and that is to die in the last ditch.' To mark their gratitude to William for his conduct of this war the States General made the office of Stadtholder hereditary in his house.

In 1675 William had a dangerous attack of smallpox through which he was nursed by his friend Bentinck, afterwards Earl of Portland. Immediately on his recovery he returned to the field. At Maestricht in 1676 he was wounded and at Moncassel he signally distinguished himself by personal bravery. But the French remained victorious. Louis XIV was now almost omnipotent in Europe; and as the odds against him were so heavy William determined to make a dynastic alliance with England. Encouraged by Danby, the Lord Treasurer, and his friend Temple, he again went to London, and in October 1677 he formally proposed for the Princess Mary then aged fifteen. She was his first cousin and, after her father the Duke of York, presumptive heiress to the English throne.

In England the idea was popular, for though the court despised William as a weakling who neither gambled, drank nor amused himself with women, yet Mary's marriage with a Protestant abated the fear of a Popish King. Charles and James were less disposed to it, but they had to agree; and on November 4th 1677 the wedding took place at St. James's Palace at midnight.

William returned with his bride to Holland only to find that the intrigues of Charles and the successes of Louis had deferred the prospects of peace. In August 1678 he was again defeated in the field, but soon afterwards the Treaty of Nimeguen brought about

a general pacification, and he became comparatively secure. The undisputed ruler of Holland and the principal opponent of France his reputation in England was now so much enhanced that on the proposed exclusion of the Duke of York from the English throne William was suggested as Regent. This turned his thoughts more definitely to England. He was ambitious, immersed in politics and ready to play a waiting game: while his connection with England ensured the safety of his beloved Holland. At The Hague he successively entertained his Protestant cousin, the Duke of Monmouth, and his Catholic uncle and father-in-law, the Duke of York, the two protagonists of the rival factions in England. In 1681 he went again to London to keep in touch with the Whig leaders, and on his return to Holland he built up a fresh alliance against Louis, bringing Spain, Sweden and the Empire into a defensive league. His hereditary principality of Orange, which he had never seen, had been seized by the French, and two years later they took Luxembourg also. William could get no grants from the States for a campaign of rescue so he had to stay and hunt in Holland, watching his gains disappear and biding his time.

In 1685 Charles II died, and his brother James became King of England. William and his father-in-law had never been friendly though they maintained a semblance of amity. William kept James informed of the preparations for Monmouth's expedition, did his best to prevent its sailing, and sent the English regiments in his service to resist it: and Monmouth's death restored William and his wife to their position as the hope of the English Protestants. But the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the consequent flow of Huguenots into the Netherlands made matters difficult, and during the following year the arbitrary actions of James increased William's distrust.

Ever since their marriage there had been a certain tension between William and his wife. William had perhaps been jealous of Mary's political future and he

had certainly amused himself with some of her friends; while Mary, with no children, had given herself up to religion. But Bishop Burnet came over to The Hague and in a short time he improved the position by inducing Mary to say how willing she was to resign to her husband her effective rights to the English crown. This eased matters considerably, and William now began to appreciate his wife's loyalty.

In England matters were moving quickly. James's Declarations of Indulgence, which meant the restoration of the Catholic religion, drew a formal protest from William; and early in 1688 the States General allowed him to prepare an expedition against any eventualities. In June he had news of the trial of the seven bishops and of the birth of the Prince of Wales, which put an end to Mary's prospects, and on July 1st he received an invitation from some leading Whig and Tory lords to come over and deliver England. When he had read the letter he said to his minister "*Aut nunc aut nunquam*" and from that moment he made ready.

For several months he was held back, the collection of his troops, the uncertain attitude of James and the French, and the contrariness of the weather combining to delay him. But at last he embarked, and after successfully avoiding the English fleet he landed at Torbay on November 5th 1688. He had with him 14,000 men, Dutch, Swedes and Swiss, and among his officers were several English nobles. He declared at once for a free Parliament. His first reception was not all that he could have wished, and for several days few persons of position joined him; but in Exeter he was welcomed. "He entered that city on a white palfrey, armed cap-à-pie, with two hundred blacks brought from the plantations of the Netherlands in America and two hundred Laplanders in bearskins."\* He then began to move slowly towards London.

The royal troops lay at Salisbury; but when James joined his army there his principal supporters deserted.

\* Broadside, 1688.

He accordingly returned to London; while William advanced to Hungerford and Windsor. James made some attempts to treat; but the mass of the army and the people were against him; and after an unsuccessful effort to fly he was allowed to slip away to Rochester and France, the most easy solution for William.

On December 18th William arrived at St. James's Palace "very stately, serious and reserved. A great multitude had assembled to meet him; every hat and cane was adorned with an orange ribbon, the bells were ringing, illuminations and bonfires were everywhere." \* Peers and prelates, aldermen and judges, vied with the populace in welcoming their deliverer. But William had to be careful. He kept quiet and waited.

At the centre of affairs was Lord Halifax, a man of high position, much ability and moderate views. He was supported by Lords Danby and Devonshire, Sir Edward Seymour and Bishop Compton. To them mainly was due the success of the Revolution. On the advice of Halifax a Convention was summoned, and after the proposal of a regency had been rejected by William who said "he had no wish to be his wife's gentleman usher," it was decided to offer the crown to him and his wife for their joint and single lives, the executive power to remain with William. On February 12th 1689 Mary arrived from Holland, and on the following day in the banqueting room at Whitehall the Prince and Princess of Orange received the Lords and Commons and were proclaimed King and Queen. By the Declaration of Right Parliament then reiterated the privileges and liberties of the British nation, and by the Act of Settlement they confirmed the descent of the crown in the Protestant line. William and Mary thus ascended the throne by a purely Parliamentary title. At first there was some division of opinion, for the hereditary idea was strong; but eventually the majority of the Tories agreed with the Whigs, and except for the extreme High Churchmen, the Non-Jurors and the Jacobites everyone accepted the arrangement.

\* Macaulay, ii. 587.



On April 11th the two sovereigns were crowned by the Bishop of London; and early in May war was declared upon France; for Louis XIV was not only the immemorial foe of William but was now the ally of his rival James who was established at St. Germain.

In England the new policy was more popular than the new King. William was often in bad health, and as he relied on hunting to keep him fit he would not stay at St. James's but removed to Hampton Court "where he was apt to be peevish, silent and reserved, not visible, open or communicative." The ways of Charles had been much more sociable, and the change was not appreciated. To come nearer to London William bought and rebuilt Kensington House but he still remained aloof, and his methods and manners "spread a universal discontent in the City."\* On his part he soon appraised his subjects. "The Whigs," he said, "loved him best, but they did not like monarchy; and though the Tories were friends to the monarchy, he was not their monarch." So in business he relied on the men who had brought him over and on a few of his Dutch favourites, Halifax, Danby, Sidney and Bentinck. His friend Temple had retired from politics, but William used to ride out to visit him at Moor Park where he would sometimes walk in the garden with his host's young secretary, Jonathan Swift.

William's democratic upbringing made his administration tolerant. He permitted freedom of religious worship, he continued the methods of political management that obtained, and he was not above taking gifts of money when the opportunity served. But he did not care for the task he had assumed. He told Burnet that he would go through with it or perish, but that he understood a campaign better than how to govern the British, though he was confident that the Queen would find a right way of pleasing them.† In his absences abroad he entrusted the government to her, and she carried it on with equal dislike and discretion.

\* Burnet, iv. 2, 3.

† *Ibid.*, iv. 82, 86.

At the very outset of his reign William's hands were full, for soon after his flight James II landed in Ireland with French troops and money. William sent his best commander, Marshal Schomberg, to attack him, and a few months later he followed himself, the first King of England to set foot in Ireland since Richard II three hundred years before. In July 1690, after a short campaign he won a signal victory at the Boyne. As the Jacobite army came into sight he cried out "I am glad to see you, gentlemen; if you escape me now the fault will be mine."\* In this engagement his bravery and endurance were remarkable, 'for though he was wounded and was seventeen hours in the saddle he *never remitted his coolness or his courtesy to friends or foes.*' In Ulster he left a name that is still a touchstone of party or faction.

Once Ireland was pacified William returned to Holland and after assembling a considerable army he resumed his war against the French, though without much success. He had formed a new league with the Empire and Spain which developed later into the Grand Alliance. It was a powerful union against Louis and was eventually to break his power, though the fact that England was the paymaster did not make it popular in Parliament. With them William was already in disagreement, for now that the kingdom was safe they forgot their recent dangers. Yet the country was not quiet. A Jacobite rising in Scotland had to be severely suppressed, the massacre of Glencoe being one of its incidents; and when William discovered that his sister-in-law Anne and her friends the Churchills were intriguing against him he forbade her the court and dismissed Marlborough from his employments. "Were I and my Lord Marlborough private persons" he said, "the sword would settle between us."†

Anne had become a centre of Tory opposition, while Marlborough plotted with James at St. Germain. As a result the French again prepared to invade England,

\* Green, 693.

† *Ibid.*, 707.

until in May 1692 their fleet was heavily defeated at the Battle of La Hogue. In August however William lost the battle of Steenkirk in the Low Countries and in the following year he was beaten at Neerwinden. These campaigns were expensive and disappointing and they did not endear him to the English, for he was constantly away with his troops on the Continent, only visiting England for short periods in order to get money. The Queen filled his place to the best of her ability, but in 1694 she died of smallpox, an immense grief to her husband and a considerable loss to his position. He was then reconciled to Anne, but he still remained unpopular. Parliament checked his designs; Jacobite plots were rife: and most of his military adventures were failures. Eventually in October 1697 he made an indecisive peace with France by the Treaty of Ryswick.

Meanwhile the prosperity of his kingdom was advancing. The foundation of the Bank of England and the development of the East India Company had largely increased the financial importance of London. In the country agriculture flourished, industry was expanding, and riches grew yearly. But though the people generally were contented William's struggles with Parliament went on. Intent on preserving Holland from the French he insisted on keeping a standing army in England, and to this Whigs and Tories were equally opposed. Gradually he grew so dissatisfied with his lack of power and the constant opposition to his policy that he seriously considered retiring to The Hague. Halifax, his firmest supporter, was dead; Bentinck, his oldest friend, was jealous; Anne, his heiress, was in the hands of the Marlboroughs; and he was now compelled by Parliament to dismiss his trusty Dutch Guards. He resented the attitude of the English as much as they disliked his.

In November 1700 the death of the King of Spain opened the question of that country being ruled by a Bourbon prince. William regarded such a contingency as dangerous and wished to prepare for another war; but Parliament as usual hung fire, the interests of England being less

threatened than those of Holland. A few months earlier the Duke of Gloucester, Anne's only remaining child, had died. As William had no issue this left the succession to the English throne undetermined; and to secure a Protestant dynasty the Act of Settlement was amended, fixing the crown on the Electress Sophia of Hanover, a granddaughter of James I, and her descendants.

At last William succeeded in inducing both Whigs and Tories to consent to a league with Holland against the French; and the Grand Alliance was then renewed. He went over to The Hague, and there in September 1701 he heard that on James's death at St. Germain Louis had recognised his son as King of England. This instantly brought English opinion round to William's side, and his dismissal of the French ambassador and his declaration of war met with general approval. In the autumn he returned to London and busied himself with preparations for hostilities. But though his mind was as brisk as ever his health was failing, the result of asthma, dropsy, the strenuous life he had led, and the constant vexations of his position.

On February 20th 1702 when riding near Hampton Court his horse fell and he broke his collar bone. He was taken to Kensington where complications in his lungs developed, and he soon became seriously ill. He went on doing business however, though with difficulty, until one day he remarked "*Je tire vers ma fin.*" He grew rapidly worse and on March 18th 1702 he died from pleurisy at the age of fifty-one. He had reigned just thirteen years and was succeeded by his sister-in-law Anne: he was buried in Westminster Abbey.

William III was small and naturally weak. He used to be lifted on to his horse and had often to keep up his strength by dramdrinking. Bishop Burnet says "he was always asthmatical and the dregs of the smallpox falling on his lungs he had a constant deep cough. His behaviour was solemn and serious, seldom cheerful and but with a few. He spoke little and very slowly and most commonly with a disgusting dryness which was

his character at all times except in a day of battle, for then he was all fire though without passion; he was everywhere and looked to everything. He had no great advantage from his education: but he spoke Dutch, French, English and German equally well: and he understood the Latin, Spanish and Italian. He had a memory that amazed all about him, for it never failed him, and he was an exact observer of men and things.

“All his senses were critical and exquisite. His strength lay rather in a true discerning and a sound judgment than in imagination or invention. His designs were always great and good, but he did not descend enough to the humours of the people to make himself and his notions more acceptable to them. His reservedness grew on him, but he had observed the errors of too much talking more than those of too cold a silence. He did not like contradiction nor to have his actions censured: but he loved to employ and favour those who had the arts of complacency, yet he did not like flatterers. His genius lay chiefly in war, in which his courage was more admired than his conduct. He was too lavish of money both in his buildings and to his favourites, but too sparing in rewarding services. He gave too much way to his own humour almost in everything. He knew all foreign affairs well and understood the state of every court in Europe: but he did not apply himself enough to affairs at home. He believed the Christian religion very firmly and was exemplarily decent and devout in worship, being much possessed with the belief of absolute decrees, zealous for toleration, though with cold behaviour towards the clergy. He liked the Dutch and was much beloved among them: but the ill returns he met from the English nation had soured his mind and had in a great measure alienated him from them, so that he grew too remiss and careless in his affairs. Few men had the art of concealing and governing passion more than he had: yet few men had stronger passions.”\* Lord Dartmouth adds that he was a man of no humanity, and that liking to have no

\* Burnet, Own Times, iv. 547 et seq.

superior genius about him he surrounded himself with men of inferior capacities, giving little power to his ministers.

In matters of faith William was tolerant. When the Scots deputation which offered him their crown hinted at the persecution of those who were not Presbyterians he replied "We never could be of that mind that violence was suited to the advancing of true religion." \* He had an unfailing faith in predestination and a fixed determination to protect his country from the rapacity of Louis; and these two beliefs helped each other, so that from his earliest years he subordinated everything to saving Holland and the Protestant religion from France. For this he formed coalitions and led armies against the most powerful state in Europe: for this he entered on his English adventure: for this he endured the difficulties of a strange country and the ways of unsympathetic subjects. Domestic politics interested him little: they were but a means to an end; and his system in England resolved itself into balancing Whigs against Tories and High Churchmen against Nonconformists. But though his predilections were towards absolute rule, circumstances forced him to compromise. The Tories considered him a usurper, while the Whigs regarded him as their nominee; but he paid little heed to either, relying on his Dutch favourites and his Dutch footguards and much preferring to fight the French abroad rather than to suffer the perversities and pride of his English mentors at home.

His court was dull, sober and cold. "The King was always thinking, the Queen always talking and the Princess always eating." In his youth William had had some love affairs; and his wife's maid of honour Elizabeth Villiers, afterwards Countess of Orkney, 'though she squinted and was as ugly as a dragon,' possessed considerable influence over him: the tales of his impotence and of his being addicted to unnatural vice appear to be quite without foundation. When at home he was very domesticated, always attending the tea table and being

\* Green, 686.

glad to play with children. Of the Dutch, Bentinck and Keppel, whom he created Earls of Portland and Albemarle, were his closest friends ; while to Halifax, Burnet, Somers, Temple and Sidney he gave some of his confidence. The last-named used to entertain him in St. James's Square with firework representations of famous battles.

In the main however William trusted to his own star and his own designs—"he was his own Prime Minister and his own Foreign Minister,"\* and thus he frequently fared worse than he might have done by using capable advisers. But he felt that he had been badly treated by the English whom he had saved from Popery, and he was disgusted with their politics.

We blame the King that he relies too much  
On Strangers, Germans, Hugonots and Dutch ;  
And seldom does his great Affairs of State  
To English Counsellors communicate.  
The Fact might very well be answered thus ;  
He has so often been betrayed by us,  
He must have been a Madman to rely  
On English Gentlemen's Fidelity.†

William's circumstances, his health, and his wife's death so shook him that his later years were embittered. He had hardly any mental relaxations, and his only physical pursuits, warfare and hunting, often overtaxed his strength. The great business of Europe and the defence of his faith and country had always absorbed his thoughts and actions ; and after a career of mixed successes and defeats he saw his hopes almost achieved. At that moment he died, having dealt the first real blow to the formidable power of France and having done much more for England than she ever did for him.

A fine and noble character, astute, industrious and brave, he was little valued in his own day by England ; but his ideals and character were in such contrast to those of the princes who preceded or followed him that he has since risen as a leader and a ruler to a height of fame which few English Kings have either deserved or attained.

\* Trevelyan, 510.

† State Poems, ii. 41.







MARY II

*From the picture by W. Wissing in the National Portraitt Gallery*

## MARY II

1662-1694

MARY STUART was born at St. James's Palace on April 30th 1662, the second but eldest surviving child of James, Duke of York, afterwards James II, by Lady Anne Hyde, daughter of Edward, 1st Earl of Clarendon. At the time of her birth her father was heir presumptive to his brother Charles II, while her grandfather was Lord Chancellor and chief minister. Her arrival pleased few, for a boy had been hoped for, yet from her earliest years she was a figure of interest. In 1664 Pepys writes "With the duke and saw him with great pleasure play with his little girle, like an ordinary private father of a child,"\* and again in 1669, "To Whitehall, and there to the Duke of York's lodgings: in the meantime I did see the young duchess, a little child in hanging sleeves, dance most finely, so as almost to ravish me her ears were so good: taught by a Frenchman."†

Mary and her sister Anne lived at first with their grandfather Lord Clarendon at Twickenham, and after his exile in 1667 at Richmond Palace. Their governess was Lady Frances Villiers, and their playmates her daughters Elizabeth and Anne, with Frances Apsley and Sarah Jennings. They were brought up as Protestants, Bishop Compton and Archdeacon Lake superintending their religious education, and they were also taught French, dancing and drawing.

In 1671 the Duchess of York died. She had had eight children, of whom four survived her, but two of these died within the year. Mary and Anne were thus

\* Pepys, ii. 166.

† *Ibid.*, iv. 143.

left alone. Their father had now become a Catholic, and the King was compelled by public opinion to withdraw the children from his influence, for Mary was the eventual heir to the crown. With her sister she lived a solitary life and her lack of family affection increased a naturally emotional nature. As a girl she seems always to have been longing for love. In her letters she calls Miss Apsley "dear, dear husband" and signs herself "Your dog in a string, your fish in a net, your bird in a cage, your humbel trout Mary Clorinne." \*

Mary's future marriage was already of political importance, and when she was only eight her cousin William of Orange came over to sound the King about it. A match with William however was not favoured by Charles or Louis XIV; so the King of Spain, the Dauphin and the Prince of Sweden were mentioned as rival candidates. But later on as the feeling against any Catholic connection grew, a more Protestant policy was required. Danby the Lord Treasurer was anxious to appease the opposition by a popular move; he advocated the Dutch alliance, and in October 1677 William returned to England and made his offer. When Mary was told of it by her father "she wept all the afternoon and the following day"; but her complaints were vain. On November 4th she was married and a fortnight later she left for The Hague.

The Prince still bowing on the Deck did stand,  
And held his weeping Princess by the Hand.†

Mary was not yet sixteen, dark, plump, fresh coloured and usually smiling.

The next ten years of her life were passed in Holland and they were not happy. She was young, gay and agreeable; while her husband was far older than his age, serious and entirely occupied with affairs. He had a weak constitution which he worked to the utmost; there were no children, and after two miscarriages little prospect of any. Nor was he faithful. Almost at once he began to flirt with Elizabeth Villiers, one of Mary's maids of

\* Sandars, 19.

† State Poems, iii. 115.

honour; and she gradually assumed the position of his mistress to his wife's constant though silent grief. Bilked of her natural affections Mary settled down to a quiet and exemplary life. Dr. Hooper, one of her chaplains, remarks that she never said or did anything that she should not. She usually lived at the House in the Wood outside The Hague, and she was so often left alone that she had her private chapel in her dining-room "as her husband never dined with her." Her health was uncertain, and in 1679 she went to Aix la Chapelle to recover from the ague. In that year her father, stepmother and sister came over to visit her. The new Duchess of York, Mary of Modena, who was only four years her senior, liked her and "used to call her Lemon because she had married an Orange."

After another illness Mary turned still more to religion and to "serving her husband." She learnt to speak Dutch and grew very popular in Holland; but she kept free from politics, passing her time in skating, playing cards, reading, and writing prayers.

In January 1685 the Duke of Monmouth, Charles's eldest natural son and the hope of the English Protestants, had to leave England. He came to The Hague, and although there were tales that he was really legitimate and it was certain that he was a dangerous rival to her father, Mary and William treated him with hospitality. A state ball was given for him in the Orange Zaal, and Mary skated with him on the canals "poised on one leg and clad in petticoats shorter than those usually worn." \* A few months later the death of Charles and the accession of James encouraged Monmouth to lead a rebellion which resulted in his defeat and execution.

Mary was now heiress to the English throne. But this did not improve her relations with her husband, for William was determined never to be a Prince Consort. Bishop Burnet however paid her a visit; and at his suggestion Mary promised to transfer the government of England to her husband, should she inherit it.

\* Macaulay, i. 531.

This offer William greatly appreciated ; and Mary's unswerving loyalty and her bold resistance to her father's attempts to convert her at last gained his affections.

The next two years were difficult ; for Mary was torn between her duty to her father and her love for her husband. But the trial of the seven bishops and the birth of a Prince of Wales shocked all her beliefs and made her William's fervent ally. She warmly seconded his championship of the Protestant cause and approved of his expedition to support it. On his departure for England in the autumn of 1688 she remained strictly retired, though keeping a cheerful spirit and appearance. In her memoirs she writes "I had nobody I could rely on for advice, and being so little used to business was in no small pain, yet I set myself about to make preparations of prayers and meditations to sanctify my privacy. I composed likewise a prayer for the converted. The misfortunes of my father, the thought of arriving in his place, made me very loath to leave Holland. I wisht of all things to see the prince yet I had rather seen him there than in England." \*

William's venture was successful ; and when James had fled to France and the Parliamentary arrangements were settled Mary was sent for. She crossed to England in the royal yacht and on February 12th 1689 she arrived at Whitehall about five o'clock in the evening. Next day she and William were jointly offered the crown. The change from uncertainty to security, the meeting with her husband, who had cautioned her to seem cheerful, the sight of her native country and her happy reception there so exhilarated her that she gave the impression of being unfilial and callous. Evelyn says "She came into Whitehall laughing and jolly, so as to seem quite transported. She rose early in the morning and in her undresse, as it was reported, before her women were up, went from roome to roome, lay in the same bed where the late Queene lay, and within a night or two sat downe to

\* Memoirs of Mary, 6, 7.

play at basset. She smiled upon and talked to everybody and went to our prayers. This carriage was censured by many." \* Mary herself mentions it: "Here was I guilty of a great sin, I let myself go on too much and the Devil immediately took his advantage, the world filled my mind and left little room for good thoughts." †

But she soon settled down to her serious ways, "surprised" as she says "to see so little devotion in a people so lately in most eminent danger. I found a great change: from the life of a nun I was come into a noisy world full of vanity: from having publick prayer four times a day to have barely leisure to go twice and that in front of a crowd with much formality and little devotion." ‡

His health and his hunting made William dislike living in London, so he bought Kensington House from Lord Nottingham. While it was being altered he and Mary lived at Hampton Court and then at Holland House. Their position was not comfortable; for already there were difficulties with Mary's sister, the Princess Anne, who was married to Prince George of Denmark and was entirely under the sway of Lord and Lady Marlborough. "I had a very sensible affection" says Mary, "to see how my sister was making parties to get a revenue settled and said nothing of it to me. She carefully avoided all occasions of being alone with me. I will say nothing of Lord Marlborough because 'tis he I could say the most of, and he can never deserve either trust or esteem." §

In June 1690 William went to Ireland to suppress an insurrection in favour of James. Mary was left in control of the government, assisted by nine members of the Council, and for the rest of her life she was as often as not in this position, the King being constantly abroad. Despite her distaste for business she devoted herself to it. "I found myself at Whitehall" she says "as in a new world, deprived of all that was dear to me in the

\* Evelyn, iii. 69.

† *Ibid.*, 12.

‡ Memoirs of Mary, 11.

§ *Ibid.*, 17, 30

person of my husband, left among those that were perfect strangers to me. My sister of a humour so reserved I could have little comfort from her: the Great Council of a strange composition, the Cabinet not much better. The treasury was in a bad condition, there was no money, the fleet under the command of Lord Torrington who lay drinking and treating his friends till the French came upon the coast; many enemies and discontented persons in the kingdom and not above 5 or 6,000 men to defend it. Lord President once asking me what I would do in case of any rising in the City, I answered that I could not tell how frightened I might be but I would promise not to be governed by my own or others' fears but follow the advice of those I believed had most courage and judgment—and was resolved in myself, let what would happen, I would never go from Whitehall. I am by nature timourous so I feared the worst, but I knew also that God was above all and that if it pleased him he would defend me from all dangers." \*

During the next two years Mary was again seriously ill but she continued her rigorous self-discipline. She regarded two fires that broke out at Whitehall and Kensington as a punishment for "too much contentment in the convenience of my house and neatness of my furniture." † At Kensington she found some quiet and happiness: her letters written from there are full of content. In the winter William returned from Holland and was exceptionally kind to her, a rare pleasure for which she was deeply grateful. On his departure she resumed the administration, but "everything then went wrong and neither her ministers nor her relatives seemed to help her." In a letter to her cousin the Electress Sophia she says "I remember I may write in English. I must ask your pardon for beginning in my ill french wick I write every day worse and worse. There has never bin a year since I came into England in which the King has not bin away allmost 8 months. That is one of my crosses but I learne patience." ‡ By this time her brave and honest

\* *Memoirs of Mary*, 36.

† *Ibid.*, 43.

‡ *Ibid.*, 102, 108.

conduct of affairs had become known and her popularity in London had greatly increased.

In the winter of 1694 Mary caught smallpox. Her constitution had never been strong; and after a short illness she died on December 28th at Kensington Palace at the age of thirty-two, having reigned six years. She was buried in Henry VII's Chapel in Westminster Abbey. The news of her death caused genuine and widespread grief both in England and the United Provinces. Odes were written to her by Prior and Congreve; and as a memorial William much enlarged Greenwich Hospital in accordance with a plan she had approved. That and the Serpentine Water in Hyde Park were her best-known gifts to London.

Mary's education and knowledge were limited, but her tastes were simple and straightforward. Walking was her principal exercise, and she took a great interest in her books, flowers and china. She was devoted to cards and to 'lively and obliging' conversation, very different from William. Her morality was unimpeached, for her religion and her husband occupied all her days. Politics she detested, saying that "women were not fitted for them," but when she had to manage the government she did it with industry, intelligence and courage. Burnet who knew her well said that "everything in her was easy and natural: she was singular in great charities to the poor:"\* Evelyn considered her "such an admirable woman as does if possible outdo the renowned Queene Elizabeth."† She has been called unfilial to her father; but in her view he had persecuted the faith in which she was born, had tried to deprive her of her just inheritance, had joined the enemies of her husband, and had even approved attempts to kill him. Yet during the Irish campaign she wrote of him to William "I know I need not beg you to let him be taken care of: yet for my sake let people know you would have no harm come to his person."‡

There is little question as to Mary's good qualities.

\* Burnet, iv. 85. † Evelyn, iii. 120. ‡ Strickland, vii. 265.



A quiet girl, married young, damaged in her health as a result, and neglected by her husband, she consoled herself by devotion to her faith and her duty. Her youth, her position and William's character made it difficult for her to gain his love, and that she did so is as much a tribute to her as to him. She became his best and most loyal friend: her letters to him breathe a real spirit of sense, strength and affection. Her lifelong sorrow, clearly seen in her correspondence, was that she had given him no children. For this she did her best to atone by identifying herself with his interests. Always overshadowed by an active and ambitious consort, she was without doubt the most honest and discreet of the Stuarts, and in a corrupt and immoral age she shines out as a rare type of domestic virtue and piety.





ANNE  
IN 1699

From the picture by M. Dahl in the National Portrait Gallery

## ANNE

1665-1714

ANNE STUART was born on February 6th 1665 at St. James's Palace, the second daughter of James, Duke of York by Lady Anne Hyde, daughter of Edward, 1st Earl of Clarendon. She was a weakly child suffering often from illness and particularly from her eyes; and to treat them she was sent for some months to Paris when she was five years old. With her elder sister Mary she was educated under the care of Bishop Compton, her governess being Lady Frances Villiers whose daughters were her playmates.

In 1671 her mother died. She had become a Catholic and two years later the Duke of York who had joined the same faith married another Catholic, Mary of Modena. Parliament viewed this lapse with anxiety and at its wish the two sisters, who had been brought up as Protestants, were withdrawn from their father's care. In November 1677 Mary married William of Orange. Immediately after the wedding Anne developed smallpox, and in consequence her sister refused to start for Holland for several days much to her husband's annoyance.

When she was fourteen Anne went with her father and stepmother to the Netherlands to pay Mary a visit at Brussels and The Hague. Later on the Duke of York, who was still in bad odour in England, was sent as High Commissioner to Scotland where Anne twice joined him. It was suggested that she should marry her cousin, Prince George of Hanover, or Lord Mulgrave, a very rich suitor; but nothing came of the proposals. In the spring of 1683 however a match was arranged for her with Prince

George of Denmark, brother of King Christian V. He was stupid but "a handsome fine gentleman," a Protestant and a friend of France, and he was thus acceptable to the King and the nation as well as to Louis XIV. The wedding took place on July 28th at the Chapel Royal, and Anne soon learnt to love her husband. She had grown up stout and dark, high coloured, not clever or strong but smiling and cheerful.

She was now given a regular establishment, and her first act was to appoint Mrs. Churchill her lady of the bedchamber. The connection influenced her all her life. John Churchill had been a page in her father's household; while his sister Arabella had been her mother's maid of honour and her father's mistress when Anne was still an infant. During Anne's childhood one of her friends was Sarah Jennings, a young lady of beauty and ambition who was another maid of honour. In 1678 Churchill, now a colonel, married Sarah Jennings. The two were considered the handsomest couple at court but they were short of money; so while the husband remained with the duke, his wife increased her intimacy with Anne. Churchill was an able and useful man: he was a friend of Charles, of James and of Monmouth, and he was employed by each on various missions abroad. After some military service on the Continent he accompanied James to Holland and to Scotland, gradually became his chief adviser, and soon after Anne's marriage he was made a peer. Meanwhile his wife had become her principal confidante, and the two used to correspond under assumed names, Anne being Mrs. Morley and her friend Mrs. Freeman. The stronger character soon dominated the weaker.

In 1685 King Charles died, and the Duke of York succeeded as James II. Anne remained in England fully occupied with domestic cares. In four years she had four miscarriages, as well as two children who both died at the age of a few months. By this her health was so seriously affected that during her father's reign she was little seen. Her husband was kind but incapable, and

was chiefly distinguished for attention to his bottle, his table and his bed. Anne's friends were thus able to increase their hold upon her. Churchill took an active part in the suppression of Monmouth's rebellion and was made a major-general, colonel of the Horse Guards and a gentleman of the bedchamber; but he was a shrewd man, a Protestant and a political opportunist, and he had no intention of following King James too far.

That prince was now in the full tide of his Papist policy and was antagonising the country more and more every day. In June 1688 Anne, who had gone to Bath for her health, heard of the birth of her half-brother the Prince of Wales. Although subsequently convinced of his legitimacy she was highly sceptical at first: "I shall never be satisfied" she writes to her sister "whether the child be true or false." \* This event brought about the Whig Revolution, and in the following November William of Orange landed in the west of England. Churchill, though commanding a division of James's army, was in secret communication with William, and on November 24th he deserted the King his master and joined William; his example being followed a day later by Anne's husband George of Denmark. On the same evening Anne, who was living at the Cockpit, left London with Lady Churchill and her old tutor Bishop Compton. They rode to Leicester, where several peers and persons of quality joined them, and they eventually arrived at Oxford with over five hundred horse. Meanwhile Churchill had made Anne's peace with William; and when her father had finally fled to France she and her husband returned to Whitehall. There they were visited by William; and on December 19th Anne and Lady Churchill "went to the theatre in the royal coach, both wearing orange ribbons."

During the debates on the Act of Settlement the Churchills played a prominent part. They persuaded Anne to agree to the crown being given to William and Mary, and at the coronation in April 1689 Churchill was made Earl of Marlborough. Three months later Anne

\* Dalrymple, ii. 175. D. N. B., 1444.

had a son who was christened William, created Duke of Gloucester and became prospective heir to the throne.

She was already having difficulties with the new King and Queen. Various reasons were given: the casual treatment accorded to Prince George during William's campaign in Ireland; Anne's retaining her apartments in Whitehall; the incompatibility of temper of the two sisters: and particularly the amount of revenue to be settled on Anne. In these disputes the Churchills were always behind the scenes: and the promise of a Garter for Marlborough and a pension for his wife had an influence on the terms. In the result Anne was left on very cool terms with her sister and brother-in-law, the latter of whom she now styled Caliban in her letters to Mrs. Freeman.

By William this feeling was thoroughly reciprocated. Though he fully recognised Marlborough's military ability and employed him in Ireland and Flanders he distrusted his influence over Anne. In 1692 Marlborough's correspondence with St. Germain was discovered, and William then dismissed him from his post out of hand. At the same time Anne, who was probably privy to the plot, was compelled to send away Lady Marlborough and to leave her rooms at Kensington Palace. She and her husband were not received at court or saluted by the sentries and they moved successively to Campden Hill, Berkeley House in Piccadilly and Syon. Marlborough was sent to the Tower; and though Anne strove to help him she could do little.

The next two years she spent in having more miscarriages and short-lived children, until in December 1694 matters were changed by the death of Queen Mary. Anne had offered to go and see her sister during her illness, and she was "sensibly affected" by her death. On the advice of Sunderland she wrote a loyal and sympathetic letter to William, and through the mediation of her uncle Rochester their quarrel was made up. She was the next heir to the throne, and William could no longer afford to neglect her. He received her

at court, assigned her a substantial revenue, made over St. James's Palace to her and her husband, and even consented to the Marlboroughs' return. But he knew that Anne was still corresponding with her father and accordingly he neither made her Regent when he went abroad nor did he 'bring her into any business.' Evelyn remarks on the little figure she made. She went on with her attempts to increase her family, and between 1693 and 1700 she had another half-dozen miscarriages until she became so ill from gout that she had to retire to Tunbridge Wells.

In July 1700 the little Duke of Gloucester died: he was Anne's last surviving child, and her grief was intense. His death much increased the danger of a Jacobite succession; and Parliament at William's suggestion now entailed the crown, failing Anne's issue, on the Electress Sophia of Hanover, who was a daughter of the Queen of Bohemia and a granddaughter of James I.

In September 1701 James II died in exile at St. Germain; and Louis XIV formally recognised his son as King of England. As a consequence war was declared by England on France. Six months later, on March 8th 1702, William himself died, and Anne succeeded him as Queen.

She was now a woman of thirty-seven, though looking older than her years; and it was improbable that she would have any more children. Her father and her sister were dead, her brother was in exile, her husband was of little account, and in her new position she turned again to her old friends. Within a few days of her accession Marlborough was given the Garter, made Captain-General of the Forces, Master General of the Ordnance and Ranger of Windsor Park; his wife became Groom of the Stole, Keeper of the Privy Purse and Mistress of the Robes: while soon afterwards Godolphin, Marlborough's friend and nominee, was appointed Lord Treasurer.

At this time the whole court was in mourning, "the Whigs for King William and the Tories for King James." The Queen remained in London, going occasionally to



Windsor to hunt 'in a highwheeled chaise' with galloping ponies which she drove herself. Every Sunday she held a Cabinet at which she presided. She had grown so fat and heavy with gout that at her coronation on April 23rd 1702 she had to be carried in a sedan chair from Westminster Hall to the Abbey: but at the opening of Parliament her voice and manner "made a very good impression," and she soon became fairly popular.

War had begun with France, and after the first year's campaign Marlborough was created a duke and given a pension of £5,000 a year, "an excess of honour even for such a very handsome well spoken and affable person, who supports his want of acquired knowledge by keeping good company." \* Anne humbly announced his promotion to Mrs. Freeman: "It is very uneasy to your unfortunate faithful Morley to think that she has so very little in her power to show you how sensible I am of all Lord Marlborough's kindness. . . . I hope you will give me leave to make him a Duke." †

But the influence of the new duchess was already on the wane, for the Queen had begun to resent her imperious manners and her monopoly of power. Anne however could dissemble: "there was not perhaps in all England a person who understood more artificially to disguise her passions." ‡ She wished to maintain the High Church, and her political sympathies were with the Tories. But the latter were cooling off from the war, so in 1704 Marlborough and Godolphin remodelled the ministry and brought in Harley and St. John, who were reputed moderate men.

During the next few years the prestige of England was raised to an unprecedented height by Marlborough's victories abroad, which his wife fully exploited. So much did she dictate to the Queen and press forward the Whigs that Anne began to rebel. But the duchess had no moderation. She writes to the Queen "I beg that Mr. and Mrs. Morley may see their errors and reflect that the greatest of your family has been occasioned by ill

\* Evelyn, iii. 163. † Strickland, viii. 175. ‡ *Ibid.*, viii. 173.

advice and obstinacy." \* Even the long-suffering Anne could hardly stand this: yet she admitted more Whigs to the ministry; and in 1707 Godolphin pleased her by completing the Union with Scotland. Much however was going on behind the scenes. Harley, one of the Secretaries of State, an able, unscrupulous and ambitious man, was intriguing secretly with the Queen. His intermediary was Miss Hill, a poor relation of the Marlboroughs who had been given a place in the royal household. With some dexterity and little gratitude she insinuated herself into Anne's confidence, seconding her complaints against the Whigs and undermining the influence of the favourite. But the plot was discovered; and Marlborough then insisted upon Harley leaving the Cabinet, an order to which Anne had to submit though it made her still more angry with the duchess.

The victory of Oudenarde in 1708 buoyed up the duke again, and he wrote to the Queen urging her "to get rid of her private resentments." Anne replied with some spirit that she would not be ruled by "the five tyrannising lords," her name for the Whig Junto. But in the new Parliament the Whigs were still in the ascendant. They insisted on Prince George resigning his place of Lord High Admiral, and shortly afterwards he died. Anne was heartbroken; for he had always been kind to her and she really loved him. She determined to have her revenge, and the opportunity soon occurred. As the Duchess of Marlborough continued her hectoring conduct, impertinent letters and unreasonable requests, Anne, spurred on by Harley and Miss Hill, now Mrs. Masham, told her that their future relations must be only official. The duke's influence was declining, for the Malplaquet campaign had been costly and indecisive, and the Whigs mistrusted him. In 1710 the failure of an impeachment against Dr. Sacheverell, a High Church preacher, encouraged Anne to strike. On April 17th she had a final outburst with the duchess, and they then parted never to meet again.

- \* D. N. B., i. 457.

The Tories at once gained ground. In August Anne dismissed Godolphin and made Harley Chancellor of the Exchequer and St. John Secretary of State. In January 1711 the duchess was relieved of all her offices; in May Harley was appointed Lord Treasurer and created Earl of Oxford; and in December Marlborough himself was dismissed from his post of Captain-General. Negotiations for a peace with France were pushed forward, the Queen saying that she hated the work of blood and that she had been released from a long captivity. She had now become a nervous and torpid invalid, unable to get about, querulous, harassed and bewildered by the political struggles round her.

St. John was made Lord Bolingbroke and completed the preliminaries of peace. In March 1713 the Treaty of Utrecht was signed; but it was so unpopular that to force it through Parliament Anne had to create twelve peers. She worried incessantly, and her health became worse. The Whigs believed that she wished her half-brother at St. Germain to succeed to the crown instead of the Electress Sophia: the Jacobites were strong and sanguine in many parts of the country, while Oxford and Bolingbroke with several of their colleagues were known to be in correspondence with James's son the Old Pretender. To counter these intrigues the Whigs tried to bring Prince George of Hanover, the son of the Electress, over to England; but this so much enraged the Queen that she wrote forbidding him to come.

In June 1714 the Electress died; and on July 27th Oxford, who had lately fallen in credit, was forced to resign his white staff. There were high words at the Council table; the excitement was too much for Anne, and on July 30th she had an apoplectic fit. Bolingbroke who expected to replace Oxford had not made his final arrangements with the Jacobites, but the Whigs were well prepared. Their leaders Somerset and Argyll hurried to Kensington and advised the Queen to give the staff to the Duke of Shrewsbury, another Whig. With her remaining strength she did so, saying to him "Use it for

the good of my people." Early next day, on August 1st 1714, she died at the age of forty-nine, having reigned twelve years. She was buried in Westminster Abbey beside her children and her husband, and leaving no issue she was succeeded by her cousin, the Elector of Hanover.

Anne's intelligence and attainments were as limited as her education. "In her youth," says the Duchess of Marlborough, "she never read, and cards entirely occupied her thoughts: but she wrote immoderately without style or grammar."\* Her chief charm was a soft and well-modulated voice which her uncle King Charles used to admire so much that he wished her to be trained to sing. Her natural character was weak, but Bishop Compton had given her a firm belief in the doctrines of the Church of England, and her family predilections made her a strong Tory. To her husband, a man of little capacity, she was tender and affectionate, but with her sister and brother-in-law and her uncles Clarendon and Rochester, she constantly quarrelled, and she was never intimate with her ministers. She had a poor constitution, she took little exercise, and she ate without restraint, even when she was ill. This fondness for food she had inherited from her mother. '*La duchesse de York*,' says Hamilton, '*étoit la femme d'Angleterre du plus grand appétit: c'étoit quelque chose d'édifiant que de la voir à table.*† For close upon twenty years Anne was engaged in having children, and her mind and body became so affected by the resulting indispositions that in later life she was indolent and ailing, suffering from gout and convulsions. In 1689 Evelyn remarks on her being "so monstrously swollen that it is doubtful whether her being thought with child may prove a tympany only,"‡ and later on Burnet says "she has laid down the splendour of a court and eats privately, so that except on Sundays, and a few hours twice or thrice a week at night in the drawing room, she appears so little that her court is abandoned."§ She had lost all pretensions

\* Strickland, viii. 220.

† Grammont, 263.

‡ Evelyn, iii. 79.

§ Burnet, v. 380.

to looks and was just the fat, red-faced woman in black and diamonds that Dr. Johnson faintly remembered.

Her personal tastes were undistinguished. She hated the smell of roses, liked tea, and usually omitted to sign her private letters. She had a proper idea of her position and performed her public duties with dignity. She was also a stickler for etiquette. When Prince Eugene once arrived at St. James's in an undress wig Anne received him but said that it 'should not be drawn into precedent': and on another occasion when an aide-de-camp with despatches from Flanders appeared in a similar covering she remarked that 'She supposed she might soon expect to see all her officers come to court in boots and spurs.' \*

Like her sister she was devout, and she gave much care to Church appointments; but war and politics she abhorred. "Her understanding and fitness for government were below mediocrity, for though easy of access and hearing everything very gently she came to be cold and general in her answers" so that all petitions went to her attendants and ministers.† To her friends she was grateful and she did her best to reward the Marlboroughs, until the demands of the duchess drove her to desperation. Harley and Mrs. Masham gave her a chance of freedom, but with the Tories she found even less quiet than before, for besides their internal rivalry they wished to bring in the Pretender. To this Anne was opposed, though in a vague and vacillating manner: 'a Jacobite in sentiment though not in practice she had all Queen Elizabeth's jealousy of a successor.'‡ A few months before her death she wrote to the Electress Sophia "Propose whatever you think may constitute the security of the succession. I will come into it with zeal provided it do not derogate from my dignity which I am resolved to maintain."§ The deposition of her father, her own questionable inheritance, the failure of her issue, the tyranny of her favourites, the ever-present thought that she was

\* Way, 95.

† Trevelyan, 502.

‡ Hallam, iii. 206; Burnet, vi. 217.

§ Strickland, viii. 505.

leaving her crown to a foreign cousin when she had an exiled brother alive, so distracted and depressed her that she hardly knew herself what her real wishes were.

Living in an Augustan age, surrounded by men of genius in literature, politics, art and war, she was entirely alien from them, and beyond a few simple good works such as her charity to the over prolific, she contributed little to the office she held or the kingdoms she was supposed to govern. Yet her name has remained: and Queen Anne's Walk, Queen Anne's Ride and Queen Anne's Bounty may outlast the memorials of more famous monarchs. Her personal obscurity promoted constitutional progress, for during her reign party government and ministerial responsibility began to be understood. She was the last sovereign to preside regularly at Cabinets, the last to refuse her assent to a bill in Parliament and the last to touch for the King's Evil. Her death without children enabled England to make a break with the unfortunate family which had oppressed and disturbed it for over a century.



THE HANOVERIANS

1714-1901



The Hanoverians found themselves given the crown of England by the chance of their religion, the faults of the Stuarts and the goodwill of Parliament. For a century the country had been struggling with absolutist rulers and for a generation with Catholics; and of these two dangers the party in power had determined to get rid. George I, the prince of a modest German electorate and the second cousin of Queen Anne, was the fortunate heir of his father's blood, his mother's faith and his English predecessors' dominions.





## GEORGE I

From the picture after Sir G. Kneller in the National Portrait Gallery

## GEORGE I

1660-1727

GEORGE LEWIS of Brunswick-Lüneburg afterwards George I, was born at Hanover on 28th March 1660, the eldest son of Ernest Augustus, successively Duke and Elector of Hanover, by Sophia, youngest daughter of Frederick of Wittelsbach, Elector Palatine and titular King of Bohemia, whose wife had been Elizabeth Stuart daughter of King James I of England. The family of Brunswick was a branch of the princely house of Welf of Bavaria by a distinguished descent of six hundred years, but its territorial possessions had dwindled. To restore its position in Germany its chief, the Duke of Zell, had never married and had left his inheritance to his younger brother Ernest Augustus, who in 1692 procured from the Emperor the erection of his duchy into an electorate.

George's education was that of the average German prince of his age. He was taught Latin, which he spoke fluently, French and Italian, with some music, history and religion.\* His principal pastime was staghunting, and at the age of fifteen he went on his first campaign, "bearing himself bravely at the battle of Conz on the Imperial side." In 1680 he was sent to London to see his English cousins, and there "he had the honour of kissing the hand of the Princess Anne" whom it was thought he might marry. But his family found a bride for him in the person of Sophia Dorothea, only child of his uncle the Duke of Zell by Eleanor d'Olbreuse, a French mistress whom the duke had married morganatically,

\* Toland, 73.

and who was subsequently created a countess of the Empire. George was a handsome youth with a somewhat stupid expression, short, heavy and rather fat. Sophia was in her sixteenth year, beautiful, attractive, and it is said intelligent. Heiress to the duchy of Zell she had at her feet half the princes of Germany, to one of whom, a Prince of Wolfenbüttel, she had already plighted her faith. But she had to submit to the family arrangements: and her wedding in November 1682 was a further step in the consolidation of the Hanoverian fortunes. For some years she and her husband lived together, and they had two children; but their union was never happy, for George kept numerous mistresses, while the conduct of the Princess soon gave rise to suspicion.

In 1683 George was with Sobieski at the siege of Vienna, and in that year his only son, afterwards George II, was born. In 1685 he was present at the battle of Neuhausel and in 1686 he distinguished himself at the capture of Buda. He became a brave and active soldier, serving in Hungary, Greece, Germany and Flanders, at first with the Emperor's troops and afterwards under his cousin William of Orange. At the battle of Neerwinden in 1693 he was nearly killed, and in several subsequent engagements he gave proofs of his valour. But at the court of his father he was only famed for his amours; and one of these with the Freifrau von dem Bussche so vexed his wife that she let herself be drawn into an intrigue with the Count von Königs-marck, the captain of the Elector's guard, a handsome but disreputable Swede who had made love to her and with whom it was said she tried to elope. The tale got abroad, and while George was in Berlin his father, incited by Madame de Kilmansegge, a rival for George's favours, arranged a trap for the Princess. The count was brought secretly to her bedroom during the night of July 1st 1694 and there he completely disappeared: a generation later his body was discovered under the floor of her dressing-room. The Princess was divorced and sent a prisoner to the castle of Alden in Zell where she remained for thirty-

two years, until her death in 1726. George never saw her again and for the rest of his life he lived with his mistresses.

In 1698 his father died and George succeeded to the government of Hanover. In that year he had a meeting with William III, and arrangements were drafted for including the Hanoverian line in the eventual succession to the English throne. Two years later the Princess Anne lost her only surviving child; the Act of Settlement then fixed the inheritance of the crown, failing any issue of William or Anne, on George's mother, the Electress Sophia, and her descendants, as being the nearest heirs in blood who were Protestants. Soon afterwards George succeeded to the duchy of Zell and he was subsequently admitted as ninth Elector of the Empire as its Hereditary Arch Treasurer.

His position and his prospects were now among the most considerable in Germany, for his reputation as a soldier was high. Hanover was a member of the Grand Alliance; and George was suggested as Stadtholder of Holland and even as Captain-General of the British forces. His mother the Electress, who was far his superior in ability, kept on good terms with Queen Anne in London and with the Pretender at St. Germain, while George by a discreet silence seconded her policy. Toland who was at the court of Hanover about this time gives him a remarkable eulogy: "not addicted much to any Diversions besides Hunting: reserved and therefore speaks little but judiciously; not to be exceeded in his zeal against France: well versed in the art of war, of invincible courage, a perfect man of Business, exactly regular in the Oeconomy of his Revenues, reads all his Despatches himself, writes most of his own Letters and spends a considerable part of his time in his Closet, with his Ministers, and at Herrenhausen his country house."\*

In 1704 George was visited at Hanover by the Duke of Marlborough, and their common tastes, profession and

\* Toland, 73 et seq.

politics led to a friendship. In 1709 he was given command of the Imperial Army on the Rhine, but he played only a minor part in its campaigns and resigned his post three years later. The Tory ministry in England attempted to gain his favour, but he was aware of the Jacobite sympathies of Oxford and Bolingbroke and gave them little encouragement, and in deference to Anne's wishes he set aside a suggestion that he should take up his residence in England. In June 1714 his mother the Electress died, and George then became heir presumptive to the English crown. He still maintained his political reserve but knowing the state of Anne's health he sent his envoy in London a sealed list of a Council of Regency and made preparations for the defence of his own dominions in the event of his absence.

On August 1st 1714 Queen Anne died. The Jacobites were not ready; Oxford and Bolingbroke had fallen out; and the leading Whig lords by their prompt action ensured the Protestant succession. George was peaceably proclaimed King of Great Britain; his Council of Regency took over the government; and within a week the funds had risen ten points. Five days later the news reached Hanover; and George at once restored Marlborough, who was abroad in disgrace, to his post of Captain-General.

On September 18th George arrived in England. He had singularly little connection with his new kingdom by birth, education or understanding. Not a sixtieth part of his blood was English, he spoke no English and he had no sympathy with constitutional monarchy. But he knew enough of recent history to comprehend his position and on being reminded of the fate of Charles I he said "I have nothing to fear, for the kingkillers are all my friends. I intend to put myself entirely in the hands of my ministers; they will be completely answerable for everything I do." He at once appointed a Whig ministry; and for the next half-century that party governed England.

On October 20th George was crowned at Westminster and five months later he met his first Parliament, his

speech being read for him by the Lord Chancellor. The majority was Whig, and the ministers were moderate men, but already the King was unpopular. He had brought to England his German mistresses who were rapacious and ugly; and portentous tales about them and his other foreign followers, including two negro slaves, were amplified by the Jacobites. George himself was unambitious and only anxious for quiet and ease. He was fifty-four, he took little interest in the amusements of the English court, and he regretted the delights of his rural retreat at Herrenhausen. He was also inclined to doubt the justice of his claims to a crown which he had only accepted with reluctance. But his German ministers kept him up to the mark and by a wide sale of places they and his mistresses replenished their pockets, a practice at which George is said tacitly to have connived.

At first there was some discontent in the country; and to exploit it the supporters of the Pretender engineered a Scottish rising in 1715. But it was ill timed, ill managed, and crippled by the death of Louis XIV. James, the Old Pretender, arrived too late; he was obliged to fly; and the dispositions of the English government and the general loyalty of the people soon brought the revolt to an end. Its leaders were dealt with severely, and for the rest of George's reign peace prevailed.

By this abortive attempt and by their previous connection with the Stuart family the Tories were damaged. The Church had lost much of its influence, and for some time the trading classes had been on the side of the Whigs. The latter party now committed their fortunes to the guidance of Robert Walpole, a rising minister in whom George, unable to preside at Cabinets from his ignorance of English, was equally ready to confide. In foreign affairs and in those of his electorate the King took an interest, and with the assistance of his Hanoverian counsellors Bothmar and Bernstorff he increased its prestige; but in England he usually followed Walpole's advice; and thus 'the formation of ministries,



the dissolution of Parliament, and the patronage of the Crown passed from the monarch to the Whig chiefs.\* The fear of having the Stuarts back kept England loyal to their successors.

Once the Jacobite rebellion was over and matters were going well George hurried home to Hanover for a holiday; in the thirteen years of his reign he went there seven times, often remaining six months away. In his own land he was welcomed with enthusiasm and he readily resumed his old round of stag hunts, galas and operas, "living so happily that he seemed to have forgotten the incident that happened to him and his Family on August 1st 1714."† The only fly in the ointment was the necessity of leaving his son in control in England. Between George and his heir there had always been dissension, partly due to the former's treatment of his wife, partly to the latter's reliance on "the women," partly to what was a racial tradition. George also disliked his daughter-in-law Caroline whom he used to call "*cette diablesse Madame la Princesse*," for she had much more intelligence than her husband. After his first visit to Hanover the King invariably left the government of England in the hands of lords justices, to the exclusion of the Prince of Wales.

In 1717 the intrigues of Sunderland and Stanhope drove Walpole to resign. The King besought him to remain at the treasury and put the seals back in his hat ten times, though in vain. In the following year George's quarrels with his son led to a public scene between them; and both the Prince and Princess of Wales were sent away from St. James's Palace and forbidden the court. Two years later the collapse of the South Sea Company, a wild project in which the royal family and the King's harem were involved, and which ruined thousands of investors, enforced Walpole's recall; and in 1721 he became permanent Prime Minister. At this George was delighted: "I parted with him once against my inclination," he said, "but I will never part with

\* Trevelyan, 509.

† D. N. B., vii. 1031.

him again so long as he is willing to serve me." \* Walpole's rivals died, he effected a reconciliation between the King and the Prince of Wales, and by his influence with the Princess he laid the foundations of his power in the next reign. His policy was peace, and for over twenty years there were fewer wars than England had ever known. Industry flourished; the struggles of the last century were forgotten; and the new dynasty reaped the benefit, if not by popularity at any rate by content.

The later years of George's reign were without incident. He lived a humdrum life between his mistresses and his ministers, St. James's and Hanover. In 1726 his wife died in her distant German prison; and he marked the occasion by burning her will, as he had done that of her father. She sent him, it was said, a message saying that he would follow her within the year, a prophecy which disturbed him. A few months later, when travelling to Osnaburgh, he had a paralytic stroke due to indigestion from eating melons after a bad sea crossing, for his health was otherwise good. He went on with his journey and died in his coach on June 12th 1727, being in his sixty-eighth year. He was buried in Hanover. He left two legitimate children, George II who succeeded him and Sophia Dorothea, wife of Frederick William I of Prussia. By Mlle de Schulenberg, created Duchess of Kendal, he was said to be the father of Lady Walsingham; and by Mme de Kilmansegge, created Countess of Darlington, of Lady Howe. By his latest and only English mistress, Anne Brett, he left no issue: she afterwards married, not inappropriately, Sir William Lemon and "was forgotten before her reign had extended beyond Westminster."

George I had very little of royalty in his demeanour. His manner was dry, cold and reserved. Horace Walpole who was presented to him in 1724 describes him as "an elderly man, rather pale and exactly like his pictures and coins: not tall, of an aspect rather good than august, with a dark tie wig, plain coat, waistcoat, breeches and

\* Morley, Walpole, 67.

stockings of snuff coloured cloth and a blue riband over all." \* In his living he was moderate, though "he liked late suppers and strong food." His mental attainments were limited and he had no literary or artistic interests: the tale of his quoting his good fortune in having such subjects as Newton and Leibnitz is unlikely. But he had been a good soldier and he had sufficient natural sense, knowledge and industry to discharge his duties decently. In religion he professed to be a materialist, but though free from superstition he was a staunch supporter of the German Church. His principal amusements were shooting, masquerades, music and the theatre, to which he used to go in a sedan chair without guards and sit at the back of the ladies' box so as not to be recognised. He did not understand much of English plays and his court were not very expert at French. When he asked the Duchess of Bolton the name of Cibber's *Love's Last Shift* she translated it to him as "*la dernière chemise d'amour*."

George was always full of gallantry, though his mistresses hardly deserved it. Their arrival in England had not been auspicious. As their coaches were being driven through the London streets the mob had hooted. One of the ladies putting her head out of the window said in imperfect English, 'You mistake, my friends. We come here for your goods.' Mlle de Schulenberg, who was sixty in 1714, was "tall, lean and ill favoured" and dominated by greed: she was called "the Maypole." Mme de Kilmansegge, twenty years her junior and known as the "Elephant and Castle," was pleasanter, being "generous, humorous and well read." † Countess Platten, who remained in Hanover, and Mrs. Brett had it seems some claims to beauty.

With these ladies George passed his evenings at St. James's and to them he was lavish in gifts of lands, titles, and money; but to his English subjects he was more thrifty, considering that they could look after themselves. Speaking of his first arrival at St. James's he said "I

\* Jesse, Rev. ii. 312.

† Montagu, i. 128.

looked out of the window and saw a park with a canal which I was told were mine. Next morning, Lord Chetwynd, the ranger of my park, sent me a brace of fine carp, for which I had to give five guineas to his man for bringing me my own carp out of my own canal in my own park."\* George had a certain readiness of reply, though he preferred listening to talking. At a masked ball a lady in a domino once asked him to drink to the health of the Pretender. "I will gladly drink," he said "to the health of any unfortunate prince."

His simple education and military upbringing had made him dislike the parade of royalty or intercourse with people of learning or quality. Beyond his youngest brother, whom he created Duke of York, his only relatives in England were his son and daughter-in-law, both of whom he detested; and he was thus thrown into the arms of his seraglio. Of his English subjects he was most intimate with Walpole. Placid and bucolic in temperament, equally addicted to open air and the other sex, they had similar tastes and sympathies. George used to visit Walpole at Richmond, hobnob over a pipe and a bowl of punch, and discuss in dog Latin their various hours, horses and hounds.

Lady Mary Montagu praises him. "In private life he would have been called an honest blockhead. No man was ever more free from ambition: he loved money but loved to keep his own without being rapacious of other men's. He was more properly dull than lazy and would have been well contented to have remained in his little town of Hanover if the ambition of those about him had not been greater than his own: and the natural honesty of his nature made him look upon his acceptance of the crown as an act of usurpation. Our customs and laws were all mysteries to him which he neither tried to understand nor was capable of understanding. He was passively good natured and wished all mankind to enjoy quiet if they would let him do the same."†

\* Jesse, Rev. ii. 306, 309.

† Montagu, i. 126-7.

Businesslike and honourable, though dull and commonplace, George probably thought, and posterity has agreed, that he had fulfilled his compact in coming to England and taking over its government when he would far rather have stayed in Hanover. His mother, whom he greatly admired, had inculcated into him the prestige and wealth of his English inheritance; and true to his racial instinct of aggrandisement he did his duty and expected England to do the rest. He knew how little popularity had been earned by his brilliant cousin William, and he was not much worried at earning no more himself. He was courageous, moderate and beneficent, never forgetful of his friends nor vindictive to his enemies. It was the boast of his family that "they did justice and feared none but God"; and Lord Cowper remarks that had the rising of 1715 succeeded, George would never have condescended to save himself by flight: for his early lessons of economy, discipline and restraint had made him the antithesis of his cousins the Stuarts. The history of his married life and his moral lapses are perhaps exaggerated: the former was never rightly known, the latter were the custom of the age and compared not unfavourably with those of Charles II and James II. His public career gave little cause for criticism. Though his experiences and predilections were all against democracy, he did what was wanted in England, adapting himself to a system which he had not made and did not like. An unambitious character, without genius, charm or wit he was yet the first constitutional King of England; and his straightforward conduct confirmed to his new country peace, religious security and a responsible government.





GEORGE II

From the picture by T. Hudson in the National Portrait Gallery

## GEORGE II

1683-1760

GEORGE AUGUSTUS of Hanover, afterwards George II, was born at Herrenhausern in that country on November 10th 1683, the only son of George Lewis, afterwards Elector of Hanover and King of England, by Sophia Dorothea, only child of George William, Duke of Zell. His early life was spent at Hanover with his mother, but after her divorce and imprisonment in 1694 he was transferred to the care of his paternal grandparents. It is said that as a lad he tried to rescue her, that he always cherished her remembrance and that her treatment was the cause of the quarrels between his father and himself.

George's grandmother, the old Electress, was a granddaughter of James I. Proud of her Stuart blood, a clever and capable woman of the world, she told George all about his family and taught him English. He also learnt French, Latin and history but shewed no particular ability in other directions. Of his early life very little is known, though at the age of nineteen Toland paints him in glowing terms: "a winning countenance, speaks gracefully, for his Years a great Master of History, a generous Disposition and virtuous inclinations."

In 1699 George paid a visit to his cousin King William III at Loo, where he was shown some affection and respect. A year later, on the death of Queen Anne's last remaining child, the Electress Sophia became heir to the English crown. In 1705 she and her issue were naturalised as English by Act of Parliament; and Queen Anne then created George a Knight of the Garter and Duke of Cambridge. In that year he married Caroline, daughter of the Margrave of Brandenburgh-Anspach, a



clever and attractive girl who had preferred to stick to the Protestant religion rather than become the wife of the future Emperor: she was to play a leading part in her husband's career. At this time George was a short, stiff, dapper man, fair haired and red faced, with large blue eyes and a strutting though dignified gait. He came of a military race: three of his uncles had been killed in battle: his father was a distinguished soldier, and he was determined to live up to the reputation of his family.

In 1708 he made his first campaign under Marlborough taking part in the battle of Oudenarde. He led his Hanoverian dragoons in a charge, had his horse shot under him, and several times risked his life. He never forgot this day and for the rest of his life used to wear his old military hat and coat on gala occasions. His friends urged him to go to England and take his seat in the House of Lords; but Anne discouraged the idea; so George obeyed, writing her a dutiful letter of submission. Not until 1714 did he pay his first visit to London on the occasion of his father's accession, an event at which he was so delighted that he swore that every drop of blood in his body was English and at the service of his future subjects.\* He was then declared Prince of Wales and granted a revenue and an establishment. But though thirty years of age and a married man with a family and some experience he was by no means free from faults. According to Lady Mary Montagu "the fire of his temper appeared in every look and gesture: which being unhappily under the direction of some small understanding was every day throwing him upon some indiscretion. He was naturally sincere, and his pride told him that he was placed above constraint, and he looked on all the men and women he saw as creatures he might kiss or kick for his diversion." †

Despite these disadvantages George became comparatively popular in England, for he was active, courageous and much more sociable than his father. Soon after his arrival in London he took a lively part in extinguishing

\* Jesse, Rev. iii. 4.

† Montagu, i. 133.

a fire at Spring Gardens, and he behaved with complete calm when an attempt was made on his life at Drury Lane Theatre. His predilections for the English annoyed the Hanoverians, while his feud with his father made him friends among the opposition: and Sunderland, who was at the King's ear, soon convinced him that the Prince was aiming too high.

On his father's first visit to Hanover George had been left as Guardian of the Kingdom, but with unfortunate results. "The King" says Lady Cowper, "was no sooner gone than the Prince took a Turn of being civil and kind to Everybody—he went to Hampton Court where he resided with great Splendour." \* He also sent messages to Parliament, and this conduct gave so much offence to the King that he wrote to his son from Herrenhausen: "*La premiere Lettre que je recois de votre Part, mon Fils, est sur des Sujets aussi peu dignes de vous que de moy . . . vous mêlant de Choses qui ne vous regardoient pas. Je voudrois scavoir quel Droit vous aviez de faire des Messages a la Chambre contre mon Intention.*" †

The relations between father and son, always bad, now became worse. Several of the Prince's followers were dismissed from their places; and he was never again left in control, a Council of Regeney or lords justices being named instead. In 1717 a climax was reached. The Princess of Wales had just borne a son; and the King selected as one of the godfathers his Lord Chamberlain, the Duke of Newcastle, whom the Prince specially disliked. The christening took place in the royal bed-chamber at St. James's Palace, and directly the ceremony was over the Prince went up to the duke, shook his finger angrily in his face and said in broken English "You are a rascal, but I shall find you." This so much annoyed the King that George was placed under arrest and ordered to leave the palace. He moved with his wife to Leicester House; and as these German methods of family control did not appeal to English high society

\* Cowper, 117, 121.

† *Ibid.*, 191.

he was soon surrounded by a court much more brilliant than that of his sire. The young politicians and pretty ladies flocked to it; the Princess of Wales who was popular and intelligent entertained the wits and critics; and a definite opposition to the government was formed. George was then deprived of the custody of his children; attempts were made to limit his position and income; and a scheme was even suggested to the King for kidnapping him and transporting him to America. By 1720 the feud had become so violent and the scandal so great that Sir Robert Walpole made it a condition of his rejoining the ministry that a reconciliation should take place. "In this business" says Lady Cowper, "he engrossed and monopolised the Princess to a degree of making her deaf to Everything that did not come from him, and let the Prince intrigue with his wife, which both he and the Princess knew." \*

Walpole however carried his point, and at the same time he made a lasting friend of the Princess of Wales. The royal quarrel was in appearance patched up. The Prince wrote obediently to his father and was permitted to visit him. His guards and escorts were restored, and he was taken back into nominal favour. But mutual suspicion still simmered, and for the remainder of his father's reign George found it best to eschew politics. He lived in comparative retirement at his house in Richmond Park, passing most of his time in the company of a few intimates and his wife's maids of honour.

It was there, on June 14th 1727, that he heard of his father's death. He was sleeping after luncheon, his usual habit, when Walpole, the Prime Minister, arrived with the despatch. There was some difficulty in persuading the royal attendants to wake their master; but at last they did so. Walpole was admitted to the presence and announced his news: George with his breeches in his hands merely said "That is a lie": and on being convinced, coldly told Walpole to go and get his orders from Sir Spencer Compton at Chiswick.

\* Cowper, 134.

Compton was Speaker of the House of Commons and had been for many years treasurer of George's household. He was a dull man but careful; and George, who was devoted to money, had a great belief in his capacity. He now proposed to confide the direction of affairs to Compton's hands. Compton however missed his chance, for he could not draft the royal speech to the Council. Walpole, helped by his friend the Queen, again came forward, offering to double her revenue and increase that of the King: while his brother, who was ambassador in Paris, arrived with a message from Cardinal Fleury deprecating any disturbance of the existing arrangements. George who was no fool, let himself be persuaded. He told Walpole *à propos* of the Civil List "What makes me easy in this matter will prove for your ease too: it is for my life it is to be fixed, and it is for your life also." Within a few days the bill was passed; Walpole was reinstalled in power, and the spell of progress and prosperity went on. But although the kingdom was at peace it was not so with the royal family. Almost immediately George began to quarrel with his son Frederick, Prince of Wales, repeating his own history. The Prince followed his father's example, collecting round him politicians who were Tories or were opposed to Walpole's government; and though at first they effected little, in time they became a serious menace to the minister.

For the moment however the King was happy in his favourite rôle of a successful Lothario, which his son celebrated in a skit called *Les Aventures du Prince Titi*. Hitherto his principal mistress had been Mrs. Howard, afterwards Countess of Suffolk; but on one of his journeys to Hanover he picked up Madame de Walmoden, whom he made Countess of Yarmouth; and later on he gave his affections to Lady Deloraine, his daughter's governess. As in his father's days all these ladies had their apartments in St. James's Palace, close to those of the Queen. But on the government they had little influence; for Walpole kept that in his own hands, using the Queen as

an intermediary. For such business Caroline was eminently suited. She had a brisk, sensible manner and was full of dissimulation—the Germans called her “*grandissime comédienne*,”\*—and with equal art and altruism she devoted her life to the guidance of her husband. Whether George suspected his position is doubtful. He used to spend hours with her, pacing up and down the room, snubbing her, abusing his children, looking at his watch and counting his money; until a maid of honour once told him that unless he stopped she would have to leave the room; while the young Princesses used to long for him to get a new mistress “so as to relieve Mama.” Caroline never seemed to interfere, she always remained quiet and submissive, but in the end George usually adopted her opinion and did as Walpole wished.

In this manner matters went on for years, only enlivened by the quarrels with Prince Frederick, until in 1737 Queen Caroline died. To George this was a terrible blow, for despite his numerous infidelities he really loved her. He used to write her letters thirty pages long and said that no one could hold a candle to her. On her deathbed she urged him to marry again; “*Non, non*” he said, his voice choked by sobs, “*j’aurai des maîtresses*.” “*Ah mon Dieu*,” the Queen answered, “*cela n’empêche pas*”; and turning to Walpole who stood by she said “My good Sir Robert, I recommend the King, my children and the kingdom to your care.”†

The Queen’s death was as serious a loss to Walpole as to the King, for it was now much more difficult for the one to offer or the other to accept the indirect suggestions that had formerly been made. From this time the Patriots, as the opposition was called, grew more insistent, while Walpole’s influence declined. The first sign was a declaration of war on Spain, a project favoured by the King and some of the Cabinet, but condemned by Walpole. It was followed by a war with France in support of Maria Theresa. Walpole by engrossing power had alienated the ablest men on his side; his

\* Cowper, 163.

† Morley, Walpole, 199.

colleagues opposed him; and, at last, in 1742 he was defeated and had to resign.

For a time all fell into confusion. Compton, now Earl of Wilmington, became the nominal Minister, with Carteret, an unstable genius, as Foreign Secretary. The latter was one of the few who could talk German and he flattered the King's foibles by helping him to evolve vast schemes of European policy. George had always longed to play a leading part on the Continent and particularly to emulate the successes of his nephew Frederick the Great. With the latter he once nearly fought a state duel, seconds being appointed and a *terrain* chosen, until the fear of universal ridicule saved the situation. Carteret encouraged these military ambitions; and George was promised a grand campaign against the French which the opposition broadsides treated with much derision.

“For your foreign affairs howe’er they turn out  
At least I’ll take care you shall make a great rout  
Then cock your great hat, strut, bounce and look bluff  
For though kick’d and cuff’d here you shall there kick and cuff.

With cordials like these the Monarch’s new guest  
Revived his sunk spirits and gladden’d his breast,  
Till in rapture he cried ‘My dear Lord you shall do  
Whatever you will—give me troops to review.’” \*

These bellicose schemes at first had some success. At the battle of Dettingen in 1743 George took command of his English and Hanoverian troops, the last occasion on which a King of England fought in the field. He behaved with exceptional gallantry ‘riding about like a lion’ and saying “Don’t talk to me of danger, I’ll be even with them.” Early in the action his horse bolted with him; so he dismounted, drew his sword and put himself at the head of his infantry, crying “Now, boys, now for the honour of England: fire and behave bravely and the French will soon turn.” † A victory was won; and though it had little real result George’s conduct raised

\* Wright, i. 202.

† Gent. Mag. July, 1743.

him to the position of a national hero; Handel composed a *Te Deum* in his honour.

The new policy soon led to trouble. In May 1744 the English were defeated at Fontenoy; and shortly afterwards Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender, landed in Scotland. George who was in Hanover hurried home to meet the enemy, and the government took effective measures. But the Jacobites marched as far south as Derby; London was in a panic; and for a few days the return of the Stuarts seemed possible. The King however remained quite unmoved: "Don't talk such stuff to me" he said, "whatever you may say I am determined to die King of England." His spirit struck the right note; the country remained loyal, and the complete defeat of the rebels by the Duke of Cumberland at Culloden put an end to any chance of a second Restoration.

Pelham, a pupil of Walpole's, was now Prime Minister. George liked him better than his colleagues, many of whom he had had to accept against his will: when William Pitt, a former follower of the Prince of Wales, was given office George shed tears of rage. In 1751 the Prince died, and George showed little emotion at the event: Pelham's death three years later moved him much more: "Now" he said "I shall have no more peace." Newcastle, Pelham's brother, succeeded to his place. He was George's old enemy, a busy bungler who managed the patronage, while Pitt, the genius of his age, directed the policy and incidentally won much of the British Empire. George hated Pitt and despised Newcastle, but he had to swallow both; and for the rest of his reign they remained in power.

His last years were marked by a brilliant series of victories which brought him subjects and colonies all over the world. He was getting old but he had kept his health, though his eyesight was bad. He went on playing hazard and droning to his mistresses, and he still paid close attention to foreign affairs, though he interfered very little with his ministers at home. One day he asked the Duchess of Hamilton what she most wanted to see.

She answered 'A coronation.' 'Well,' said George, 'you will not have long to wait.' On October 25th 1760 he died suddenly at Kensington from bursting a blood vessel. He was seventy-seven and had reigned thirty-three years: he was buried in Westminster Abbey. His grandson George III succeeded him.

By his wife George II had eight children of whom three survived him, the Duke of Cumberland, the Princess Amelia and the Princess Mary married to the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel. By Madame de Walmoden he is said to have been the father of a Monsieur Louis who became a field-marshal in Hanover.

While not a handsome man George had an expression full of character and a pronounced military bearing. By the Jacobites he was known as "the little captain"; though his brother-in-law Frederick William of Prussia used to call him "the comedian." He spoke English, French and Italian, all with a German accent. He had a sound knowledge of history, Continental politics and genealogy: to have studied Vatel he regarded as the test of a man's ability, and to possess a pure German descent as that of his blood. His memory was good, his observation accurate, his understanding narrow but clear, his ideas of honour punctilious and his religion orthodox. His morals were those of his age. He liked the play and the opera, patronised Handel and founded the University at Göttingen—but of literature and art he was like his father profoundly ignorant: "I hate bainting and boetry" he used to say. He also despised English fox-hunting, preferring bigger game. His manners, though affable to ladies, were formal and constrained in public, and he had no general conversation and few friends. Usually mild tempered he would when angry kick his hat or wig about the room. But avarice was his ruling passion. He burnt his father's will, kept his family short of funds and gave little in charity. The only present he ever made Walpole was a flawed diamond, and his mistresses usually left him with less than they came. He once lent Voltaire some money, the only recorded



occasion of his helping a writer. Yet he died comparatively poor, leaving only £35,000. Lord Waldegrave, one of his intimates, calls him "always just, sometimes charitable but never generous."

George had strong fighting instincts 'with the mind of a drill sergeant.' Parade and ceremonial he adored, he swore by his army and in the field he was courageous; but in politics he was, in Walpole's opinion, "as great a coward as ever wore a crown and as much afraid to lose it." During her lifetime his wife ruled him; and he must have suspected whence came the metaphors of hounds and horses which she so often quoted.

"You may strut, dapper George, but 'twill all be in vain  
We know 'tis Queen Caroline, not you that reign."

After her death he was guided by Walpole whose pluck he admired, and then by Carteret and Pelham, though not to the same extent. He knew when he was well served and stuck loyally to the Whigs. The House of Commons he disliked, the House of Lords he tolerated, while he rather despised his English subjects for their lack of discipline, though he was inordinately proud of them. To business he paid attention and he occasionally presided at a Cabinet, once as late as 1745, the last occasion on which a sovereign did so.\* Before everything he put the interests of Hanover where he was a much greater personage than he ever was in constitutional England.

Strangely enough his mistresses were all attractive women. Lady Suffolk was sensible, modest and sweet tempered, though the Queen led her a hard life: George built Marble Hill on the Richmond road for her. Madame de Walmoden, who succeeded her, was very retiring and never gave rise to the scandals of earlier days, though she became the recognised channel for places and peerages, and a good deal of money is said to have found its way into her pockets. Lady Deloraine, who had been governess to the royal children, is best known for having

\* The Times, 19. xii., 1928.

pulled the King's chair from under him after a similar trick had been played upon her by one of the Princesses. George laughed, but she was at once dismissed.

In his orderliness and economy George was a typical German, living absolutely by rule. He was temperate and regular and never varied his ways. In the winter he hunted in Richmond Park surrounded by a crowd of courtiers. In the summer he drove there "in a coach and six with the heavy horseguards kicking up the dust before him, dined, walked an hour in the garden and fancied himself the most lively and gallant prince in Europe." After his midday meal he always went to bed for an hour, the Queen accompanying him. In the evening, as the clock struck nine, he went to cards with the Princesses or to his mistresses's apartments.

With all these unattractive traits George II was a good King. Trained in a hard school, without the opportunity of making many friends, his sober sense kept him from falling into the snares which often beset the paths of princes. He chose sound ministers and supported them, he recognised and accepted Parliamentary government, he allowed neither luxury nor waste, and he did not outrage decorum. During a reign singularly fortunate in peace and war, his popularity and reputation increased, and this was not wholly due to chance. In George as in his father there was sterling stuff, a straight and solid mentality, with sufficient understanding of what appealed to his English subjects. Tenacious, dignified and aloof, he never courted Parliament or people, though when the moment came he could set the right example. In the first half of his reign England prospered under the calm rule of Walpole: in the second she was stirred by the energy of Pitt. George was the yeast to each: he liked Walpole and liked war: he hated Pitt and hated peace. The one minister built up England's industry and finance, the other her patriotism and Empire. A King under whose auspices such events can occur has some claim on the praise of posterity.

## GEORGE III

1738-1820

GEORGE WILLIAM FREDERICK of Wales, afterwards George III, was born at Norfolk House, St. James's Square, on June 4th 1738, the eldest son of Frederick Prince of Wales by Augusta daughter of Frederick II Duke of Saxe-Gotha. At the time of his birth his parents were in disgrace with George II and were keeping a court of their own which was a centre of opposition to the King's government under Sir Robert Walpole.

George was a seven-months child and so sickly that he was not expected to live, but he soon strengthened and grew up tall and healthy. He was first put under the care of Dr. Ayscough, afterwards Dean of Bristol, and subsequently of Francis, Lord North, while he had various tutors, and Quin the actor taught him elocution. He was not particularly intelligent, but slow, rather idle and inclined to sulk. He learnt to talk French and German though he had few other attainments : his favourite game was baseball.

In March 1751 he lost his father ; and a month later he was created Prince of Wales and given an official household, Lord Harcourt and Bishop Hayter of Norwich, being appointed his governor and preceptor respectively. A year later these were replaced by Lord Waldegrave and Bishop Thomas of Peterborough. His mother had a large family, four sons and two daughters, and with them and the members of her household he spent his time.

The Princess of Wales was a lively lady much under the influence of Lord Bute, a handsome Scottish pedant who was her reputed lover and from whom George had



### GEORGE III

From the picture by A Ramsay in the National Portrait Gallery



learnt the monarchical principles of Bolingbroke. She determined to keep the control of her son in her own hands, and in consequence George grew up in "an atmosphere of intrigue and jealousy." Lord Waldegrave says "I found his Royal Highness uncommonly full of princely prejudices contracted in the nursery and increased by Bedchamber Women and Pages of the Back Stairs."\* Despite her own dubious morality the Princess preserved that of her son; and George remained in leading strings until he was eighteen, when he was, says Walpole "bigoted, young and chaste." There is an unsubstantial tale that at this time he admired a pretty Quakeress named Hannah Lightfoot, and it is possible, though most unlikely, that she was for a short period his mistress. But his mother had him well in hand and she was able to defeat an attempt of the King to marry him to a Princess of Wolfenbüttel. With his grandfather George did not get on: on one occasion George II boxed his ears at Hampton Court, and this the Prince so much resented that he never afterwards would live there.

On October 25th 1760 the old King died and George succeeded to the crown. He was twenty-two, tall, fair haired, florid and blue eyed, with a pleasant expression, and far more British in thought, language and appearance than either of his immediate predecessors. "At his accession," says Lady Hervey, "everyone was pleased by his noble behaviour, his unaffected good nature and propriety." But although dignified, graceful and obliging and apparently actuated by the best of motives, he had already a will of his own. His mother used to say to him, "George be a King," and he was soon persuaded to put this dangerous advice into effect. His idea was to recover the lost privileges of the Crown and to rule not as the servant but as the master of his Cabinet. To do this he set out to monopolise as much power as he could. He had a certain talent for judging men, and he devoted himself to encouraging supporters of the prerogative and promoting feuds among the families of the Revolu-

\* Waldegrave, 63.

tion. The Tories, who had been out of office since the death of Queen Anne, were ready to do anything to get back; while the Whigs by their long monopoly of the government had grown imperious, intractable and careless. George's plan had thus some prospect of success. His first object was to discard his Whig ministers. He put Bute, who had no political experience, into the Cabinet, and Pitt thereupon resigned. He then began a concerted move against the Whigs whose internal divisions facilitated it; and here again he made progress.

In the meanwhile he determined to get married. He greatly admired Lady Sarah Lennox, the Duke of Richmond's sister, whom he used to meet at Holland House when riding out to Kew. Through a girl friend he sent her a proposal of marriage and so induced her to break off her engagement to Lord Newbottle; but a fall from her horse laid her up for some weeks in the country, and in the interval George's mother succeeded in preventing the union.\* Without delay she found a bride for him in the person of Charlotte Sophia younger daughter of Louis Frederick, Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. This young lady was aged eighteen, and was small and plain. She had lived hitherto in extreme simplicity in a minor German court, but she was sensible, bright and pious, and for nearly sixty years she made George an excellent wife. They were married at St. James's Palace on September 8th 1761; and a fortnight later their coronation took place. It was a magnificent ceremony, though some untoward incidents marred it. The principal diamond dropped out of the crown in Westminster Hall; the London aldermen found no table provided for them at the banquet; and the Deputy Earl Marshal, when reprimanded by the King, promised "that it should not occur again." It was noted on this occasion that "the King's knowledge of precedents enabled him to set the peers and the heralds right in their duties."† George now bought Buckingham House which he improved and renamed the Queen's Palace. It became his permanent residence when in

\* Grenville Papers, iv. 209.

† Jesse, George III, i. 105.

London, and here his children were born and most of his business was transacted.

Up to this time George had been a popular prince, but his personal entry into party politics soon changed public feeling. In May 1762 he dismissed the remaining Whigs and astounded the world by making Bute Prime Minister; while he began himself to take an active part in the management of the House of Commons and the detailed direction of policy. To all who opposed him he showed open dislike, treating many of them with considerable rudeness. A number of Whig magnates were turned out of their lord lieutenancies, supporters of lesser note were cold shouldered or harried, and gradually the whole party was proscribed.

At first these efforts at direct government met with little success. George had to get rid of Bute, and in the first ten years of his reign he had no less than seven Prime Ministers, in the appointment and dismissal of whom he was himself the chief factor. But he was able and stubborn and gradually he gained more power. By distributing patronage personally, by filling the House of Commons with placemen, and by influencing members with offices or bribes, he got the control of votes into his own hands and became in effect the leader of the government. He treated political differences as personal affronts: "I will have no innovations," "I must consult my honour," he used to say to his ministers. He stuck strictly to his system, worked like a negro and underwent many unpleasant rebuffs, until at last the labour and worry affected his health. In January 1765 he had a serious attack of illness which lasted nearly three months, the first sign of his later mental derangement. On March 18th Grenville, the Prime Minister, still found "his conversation and manner a good deal estranged," and he was often 'gloomy,' 'flustered,' 'confused,' 'exasperated' or 'offended.'\*

George hated the Grenvilles, the Minister himself, his brother Lord Temple, and his brother-in-law Pitt; and

\* Grenville Papers, *passim*



he used to say that he would rather see the Devil in his closet. But they were a difficult trio to beat; and after continual altercations the King had at last to agree to send Bute away from London, for though out of office he was still believed to influence the royal mind. To get rid of Grenville then became George's dearest wish; but to do this he was obliged to return to the hated Whigs, first to Rockingham, whom he called the "stupidest lord in his Bedchamber," and then to Pitt, whom he styled "a trumpet of sedition."\* By now he knew the men with whom he had to deal, though he rarely got their confidence, for he intrigued against them behind their backs. "He shews them" says Lord Chesterfield "all the public dislike possible and at his levee hardly speaks to any of them but speaks by the hour to anybody else."†

A succession of political disasters soon combined to damage the government: the Spitalfield Riots, the expulsion of Wilkes, and the attacks of Junius. The ministers were divided, insecure in their majorities and uncertain of the royal support, and as a consequence the power of the Crown increased. When active measures were needed George could shew calm and spirit: he would order out troops, stir up the magistrates, or find funds to save a situation or to pass a bill. In 1770, when Rockingham, Chatham and Grafton had all successively fallen, Lord North became Prime Minister. He was an early friend of George's, by some it was even said his half-brother, for they were much alike in appearance and Frederick, Prince of Wales had been an admirer of North's mother. With him as a grand vizier George carried on the government for the next twelve years, "an irresponsible King acting through responsible ministers." Gradually he gathered into his own hands all the patronage of the crown, appointing of his own motion to household offices, bishoprics, regiments and patent places. His personal expenditure he limited strictly, but he devoted considerable sums to the gratifi-

\* Brougham, i. 15.

† Jesse, George III, i. 290.

cation of members of Parliament, and in consequence his debts grew so rapidly that he had to ask the House of Commons for money to pay them. Meanwhile there was constant waste and corruption in the administration and much discontent in the country.

In 1773 the revolt of the American Colonies began. George followed the campaign with the deepest anxiety, and the defeat at Saratoga "threw him into an agony." But he refused to compromise or even to consult Chatham, who took the Americans' view and might have staved off their secession. "No advantage to this country," he writes to North, "nor personal danger to myself can make me address myself to Lord Chatham or to any other branch of opposition. I would rather lose the Crown than wear it under their shackles : " \* "Lord Chatham's motion can have no other use but to convey some fresh fuel to the Rebels. Like most of the other productions of that extraordinary brain, it contains nothing but specious words and malevolence." † "No man in my dominions desires solid peace more than I do. But no inclination to get out of the present difficulties can incline me to enter into the destruction of the Empire. . . . It is necessary for those whom Providence has placed in my station to weigh what expenses, though very great, are not sometimes necessary to prevent what would be more ruinous than any loss of money." ‡

In 1777 Parliament was again asked to pay the King's debts which were now over £600,000, largely caused by pensions and similar methods of increasing the royal influence. By this time George was convinced that he alone knew what was best for the country, and he tolerated no opposition, interfering in each department of state and writing long, verbose letters to his ministers on almost every subject. Some of his suggestions were of value; his principles were often right, and his moral courage was undoubted: in the Gordon Riots he displayed a needed example of firmness and presence of mind. But

\* Brougham, i. 108 ; Jesse, George III, ii. 202.

† Jesse, George III, ii. 251.

‡ *Ibid.*, ii. 255.

his tendency was clearly towards absolute government and a general resistance to his methods was growing. In 1780 a resolution was carried in the House of Commons that "the power of the Crown had increased, was increasing and ought to be diminished." This and the defeats in America broke the government and put an end to George's system of direct rule. Two years later North insisted on resigning. At the General Election the King did his best to influence voters, saying to a silk merchant at Windsor "The Queen wants a gown, wants a gown. No Keppel, no Keppel." But the result went against him, and he was forced to revert to a Whig ministry, though he refused to see Rockingham, the new Prime Minister, until after the Cabinet was chosen.

The Whig government's first act was to overhaul the Civil List and in a few months it made some useful reforms; but George was soon at work intriguing with Shelburne, one of the ministers, and on Rockingham's death he promoted him to be Premier. This much displeased the official Whigs, who had not been consulted, and some of them made a coalition with North which led to another ministry under Portland. George determined to dislodge them and on the discussion of the India Bill he stated publicly that anyone voting for it would be considered by him as an enemy. In December 1784 he suddenly dismissed the Cabinet, saying that he abhorred North, and he then made William Pitt, who was only twenty-four, Prime Minister. To him, the son of his old foe, George stuck with tenacity for sixteen years, giving him ample if unconstitutional assistance in maintaining a powerful government. "At last he had found a strong minister, and since he could no longer rule in person he greatly preferred Pitt to the Whigs."\*

During all these turmoils George had worked without remission, riding in and out from Windsor and Kew in all weathers, eating very little, taking his defeats and disappointments very hardly: on several occasions he had been so much upset that he even talked of return-

\* Trevelyan, 557.

ing to Hanover for good. His domestic life was also much troubled by the conduct of his eldest son the Prince of Wales, who at the age of twenty was already a byword for extravagance and scandal. The King lived so quietly himself that his court was penurious and dull; and as the nobility avoided him, or he avoided them, he was led to affect the society of the middle and lower classes, behaving in what was then held to be an undignified manner. In London he was little seen, and so unpopular had he become that in 1786 an attempt was made by a madwoman to kill him at St. James's, "an incident which he treated with great composure." Politically however he was comparatively content, for he had got rid of the Whigs, he had secured a minister with whom he agreed, and the country was again at peace after its wars with America, France and Spain.

In October 1788 George had a recurrence of his mental affection; and as this continued for some months it became necessary to make provision for a regency. The Prince of Wales was politically allied with Fox and the Whigs, and they at once pressed for his appointment. Pitt resisted them; and in March 1789 the difficulty was solved by the King's recovery. It was welcomed with genuine enthusiasm all over the kingdom, for the people at large sympathised with their sovereign. During his illness George had been under the care of various physicians but he seems to have been cured by the treatment of a Dr. Willis, who ascribed his malady to "laborious attention to business, severe bodily exercise, ascetic abstemiousness and want of sleep." \*

For some months George went to Weymouth to recuperate, but on returning to Windsor he found more troubles awaiting him in the events of the French Revolution. By this cataclysm all his traditional feelings were outraged, and the attacks on monarchy, religion and order fired him to fresh exertions. He took a strong line in pressing for war and spent his time in reviewing troops and refusing any suggestions of peace. The attitude of the

\* Jesse, George III, iii. 91.

advanced Whigs increased his anger, and he was further much distressed by proposals to relieve Catholics of their disabilities, for he considered this a violation of his coronation oath. So generally disliked were some of his views that two more attempts were made on his life; and in 1795 when he was about to drive away from St. James's Palace his coach was smashed up by the mob. In private he still led a very homely existence, hunting or walking with his family and household at Windsor or Kew, listening to music and visiting his tenants or neighbours.

His life was not happy. His two elder sons the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York were a constant source of worry: foreign affairs were threatening, famine and taxation burdened the people; and George was equally disturbed by Whigs, Popery or Revolution. In 1801 the Union with Ireland was achieved; and in the same year George gave up the title of King of France. Well over sixty and much aged he was also losing his sight and becoming infirm. But when Pitt drafted a bill for Catholic Relief, he said in the old manner "I shall reckon any man my personal enemy who proposes any such measure!" Pitt then resigned and George called upon Speaker Addington, a mediocre man, to form a government. The excitement was too much, and he had another attack of insanity which lasted for four months. In 1804 he was taken ill again, and though he was able to make a fresh change of ministry and restore Pitt to power, he remained ailing all the year. The death of Pitt in 1806 affected him deeply; and he cheerfully agreed to a Whig administration led by Grenville, a son of his old bugbear; but when the question of Catholic Relief was mooted afresh he became as obstinate as ever, saying that he would rather abdicate than yield to it. Getting into private communication with Portland, a former Prime Minister, he then suddenly dismissed his Cabinet as he had done twenty years before.

He was now a pitiable figure, almost blind, living

hidden away at Windsor and only appearing for his evening music and chapel. But he still kept up his interest in politics and was as tenacious as ever of his rights over the civil service, the army and the Church. In 1810 however he again became insane, and after October of that year he was unable to transact any business. In the following January a Regency Bill was passed; and the Prince of Wales then took over the control of the government which he retained for the remainder of the reign.

The King's condition became worse, and for the rest of his life he was imbecile and decrepit though otherwise in good health. He lived in his own apartments at Windsor where he used to play on the harp and sing prayers, a sad spectacle to all who had known his earlier years. The Queen had the care of him until her death in 1818, when the Duke of York took over the duty. Two years later, on January 29th 1820, George died at the age of eighty-one, having reigned fifty-nine years. He was buried in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, beside his wife. Of his fifteen children six sons and five daughters survived him—the Prince of Wales, the Dukes of York, Clarence, Cumberland, Sussex and Cambridge, the Queen of Wurtemberg, the Landgravine of Hesse, the Duchess of Gloucester and the Princesses Augusta and Sophia. He was succeeded by his eldest son the Prince Regent.

George III was a man of character and energy. He had a good voice and talked very fast, often repeating himself. In private his gait and demeanour were rough and homely but on occasion he could bear himself well. He rode, hunted and walked incessantly so as not to grow fat. To music he was devoted, he played on the organ and he was a regular attendant at the Bach concerts in Hanover Square. Of literature he had little knowledge, calling Shakespeare "sad stuff," though in later life he appreciated the English poets. Yet he liked to appear as a patron of learning, and he was an ardent and generous purchaser of books and prints. The royal library and his own magnificent collection

were sold by his successor to the British Museum. He was interested in agriculture, shipbuilding and mechanics, and like Louis XVI he used to work with his hands at making buttons and other small devices.

George had a certain sense of humour, plenty of good nature, much affection for his friends and for some of his family. His knowledge of public business was close and detailed and he had a clear understanding and dislike of the corruption and immorality around him. Though entirely German by blood he was, like his grandfather, immensely proud of his English crown and country: the opening words of his speech at his accession "Born and bred a Briton" marked the difference between him and his ancestors: alone of the four Georges he never visited Hanover. Of exemplary life and piety, simple, frugal, chaste and temperate, he was a firm believer in and supporter of the Anglican Church, though his orthodoxy often made him intolerant. His intelligence was narrow, and like other dull men he was suspicious of superior people: he did not care for Fox, Reynolds, Nelson, Chatham or Burke. Yet he realised the limitations of his education and in his own methodical way did his best to improve it, learning geography and genealogy, studying the Army, Navy and Clergy Lists, and becoming an authority on uniform, precedence, etiquette, household routine and the personnel of the universities and embassies. He had invincible courage both physical and moral, and was always ready to carry through his point: to oust the Whigs, to retain the Colonies or to resist Popery he would risk or bear anything: "he bribed, he bullied, he dissembled, he exercised a slippery perseverance and a vindictive resolution." \* Such a prince, bigoted and brave, was not easy to withstand. The younger Pitt alone mastered him.

George had come to the throne with a half-open mind, a high notion of the prerogative and a determination to rule. The mighty clan of Whigs was just beginning to break up, and he had the wit and strength to seize

\* Thackeray, *Four Georges*, 23, 63, 71, 75.

his opportunity. His political sympathies were founded on genuine religious convictions, and by unscrupulous methods he gradually made Cabinet government almost impossible except as he should direct. After ten years of stress and struggle he got his way and became the leader of his own administration. For another ten years he ruled like a Sultan, and his belief in his mission was confirmed. He considered himself the parent of his people and regarded his opponents as traitors or rebels : yet he always strove to suppress his temper and he never spared himself, until overwork and insanity unhinged his mind. On his recovery in 1789 his character became milder, and he pulled more easily with a minister whom he approved and who represented the middle classes. From this toil he turned with pleasure to the quiet existence which characterised his later years. Riding in Windsor Park, visiting his friends, eating roast beef, listening to his band, chatting with his family, he became in his old age a simple squire : 'the perfect type of a country gentleman with high ideals.' His prejudices still remained but they were sometimes dormant. His long reign, his lofty principles and his sober life had improved both politics and morality ; and though the royal dullness and virtue were socially derided there is no doubt that England benefited from them.

As a young man George had been a Prince Charming endowed with every good fortune : Dr. Johnson thought him the "finest gentleman he had ever seen." In middle age he was bluff Farmer George, the father and friend of his people, the first Hanoverian who had really inspired their loyalty. As an old man he commanded the sad sympathy of his subjects, a King Lear deserted by his children, alone in his palace playing hymns upon his harp. A strong, narrow, stubborn character, without reverence for the Revolution or the Whigs, George III nearly renewed the Stuart system ; but public opinion and Parliament were too strong, power was gradually wrested from him, and when he died England had become a constitutional country.



## GEORGE IV

1762-1830

GEORGE AUGUSTUS FREDERICK, afterwards George IV, was born at St. James's Palace on August 12th 1762, the eldest child of George III and Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. In the course of a month he was successively created Prince of Wales, baptised and vaccinated. At the age of three he was made a Knight of the Garter, at seven he was presented at a drawing-room, and at nine his education began under a changing series of tutors. With his younger brother Frederick, Duke of York, he lived chiefly at Bower Lodge, Kew, where he was taught ancient and modern languages, history, drawing and agriculture. His training was serious, strict and moral; for his father and mother abhorred luxury and idleness. But despite their endeavours, perhaps because of them, George's natural propensities asserted themselves. He quarrelled with his tutors, he was disobedient to his parents, and he shewed a premature disposition for dissipation and drink. He was a good-looking boy and got plenty of flattery, while true to the traditions of his house he took the opposite side to his father whenever he could. On one occasion when the King was engaged in one of his fights with the Whigs, George burst into the royal closet crying "Wilkes and liberty for ever."

These watchwords and his Whig friends gave him his cue; and at the age of eighteen he asked for more freedom and to be allowed to join the army. His requests were refused; but he was allowed a household of his own, a private suite in Buckingham House and a moderate



## GEORGE IV

From an engraving by W. Finden of a picture by Sir T. Lawrence



income. He at once began his career. He was florid and inclined to be fat, with fine eyes, curly hair, a good figure and an elegant carriage. Agreeable, temperamental, romantic and extravagant, he sang, danced and drank in every society and he was widely welcomed; for the lighter side of London saw little of the King and Queen. George's tastes lay in dress, women, wine, plays and politics. On the first he spent as much as £10,000 in a year, becoming the inventor of a special shoebuckle. His earliest mistress was Mary Robinson, called Perdita, a lovely actress whom he first saw in 1779 at Drury Lane Theatre, kept for two years and then deserted. His principal friends were his brothers the Dukes of York and Cumberland, Charles James Fox the Whig leader, and the Duke of Chartres, afterwards Philippe Égalité. With them he embarked on a course of public debauchery and political opposition which roused all his father's strongest feelings. In 1782 a Whig ministry came into power: Fox stood up for his royal patron; and George was given a civil list of over £60,000 a year, much against the King's wishes; while a further £30,000 was voted by Parliament to pay the debts he already owed.

On coming of age he was established at Carlton House in Waterloo Place; in November 1783 he took his seat in the House of Lords, and a month later he voted with Fox for the India Bill which was anathematised by the King. But the ministry fell; the Whigs were turned out; and the Prince found himself in serious difficulties. He had already largely extended Carlton House, renewing the interior, refacing the outside with stone, adding an Ionic portico and embellishing the gardens; and he now began to build the Pavilion at Brighton. His expenses increased enormously, and he soon owed £160,000 and had to sell his horses and shut up half his new palace. But he went on with his amusements, racing, gaming, balls, banquets and mistresses, pouring out money like water. The King's court at Kew was thrifty, correct and Tory: the Prince's at Carlton House was lavish, immoral and

Whig ; and the leading lights of each did not scruple to shew their contempt for their rivals.

In 1784 George made the acquaintance of Mrs. Fitzherbert. She was a widow, a Catholic, and six years older than himself ; but he fell in love with her and pursued her with his attentions. He felt, or affected to feel, the strongest passion for her ; and he used to tear his hair, roll on the floor, have hysterics and even pretend to stab himself in order to attest his devotion and evoke her sympathy. At last she was induced to agree to his proposals ; and in December 1785 they were secretly married before two witnesses at her house in Park Lane. They then lived together openly, and she was received in society as his wife. But by 1787 his financial position had become so embarrassed that he had to appeal again to his friends for Parliamentary help. Fox told him that the rumour of his marriage made it impossible for them to act ; whereupon George denied on his honour that any such ceremony had taken place. Relying on this statement Fox supported a motion for the payment of the Prince's debts and publicly denied the marriage on the floor of the House of Commons. But George had to put himself straight with Mrs. Fitzherbert and to do so he did not hesitate to repudiate Fox. Accordingly though he got his money he lost his friends and any reputation he still had for veracity.

There was now considerable feeling against him, but it had little effect on his conduct. He set up a private club for his cronies where he used to gamble and drink, losing immense sums of money. He would spend half the night at the house of his friend Brummell in Mayfair watching him dress : and tailors, cooks, horses, cards and wagers occupied all his time and thoughts. He talked, sang and drove fairly well and he was a good mimic, but he entirely lacked any other talents, while his vices had become a public scandal.

Overwrought by politics and by these delinquencies of his son, the King had an attack of insanity in 1788 ; and George at once began to intrigue for the regency. Pitt

the Prime Minister took a strong line against it and fettered the enabling bill with restrictions. Before it was passed however the King recovered his senses; and for the moment the danger was deferred. In this year George succeeded in winning the Derby, and to recoup his debts he now tried to make a living on the Turf. But his horses and his riders became suspect; the Stewards of the Joekey Club took exception to his methods; and in consequence he had to keep away from Newmarket. His loans and his I.O.U.'s were hawked about London and Europe and were not always met: he was dunned in the streets; and he had again to reduce his establishment and pawn his diamonds. He owed nearly half a million, and eventually he was obliged to sell five hundred of his horses, shut up Carlton House and retire to Bagshot Park where he lived in dubious privacy. At last his financial position became so lamentable that he was compelled to agree to a marriage in order to get relief. He married it was said for "one million sterling, William Pitt being the contractor." \*

In 1794 George's friend Lord Malmesbury was sent to Brunswick to make a proposal for the hand of the Princess Caroline of Brunswick, who was a daughter of the Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbützel by the Princess Augusta, sister of George III. She had had little education but she was a young lady of some charms and much vivacity, though Gronow calls her "*the most unattractive and almost repulsive woman that could have been found amongst German royalty.*" † The English offer was accepted with alacrity, and early in the following year the Princess was brought to London. George had previously remarked that "one damned German frau was as good as another," but when he met her he turned away to Malmesbury and said "Harris, I am not well: get me a glass of brandy." Three nights later, at his wedding, he was dead drunk, and according to his wife he spent most of the night in the fireplace. Their union was unhappy from its start, and its prospects were not

\* Gronow, i. 39.

† *Ibid.*, i. 40.

improved by Lady Jersey, George's favourite friend for the moment, being appointed principal lady-in-waiting to his wife.

Parliament had made a further attempt to regularise George's finances. His revenue was increased to £140,000 a year: £600,000 of his debts were liquidated, and £50,000 was paid him for a fresh outfit. In January 1796 his only child, the Princess Charlotte, was born. George and his wife then separated permanently, he returning to Mrs. Fitzherbert at Brighton or Carlton House, while the Princess of Wales took up her residence at Blackheath.

In 1801 and again in 1804 the King had further relapses; and the regency question was revived. George had made a show of reconciliation with his father and had been trying to get some military or political employment, proposing himself as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland or as colonel of a regiment abroad. But neither the King nor Pitt favoured such ideas, while the Whigs attached little value to George's friendship. He had lately taken Lady Hertford as his mistress, and he now distinguished himself by forming a succession of gambling clubs and restaurants, such as Wattier's and Dover House. His public position remained as deplorable as ever, and rumours of the Princess's infidelity did not improve it.

In the autumn of 1810 the King was seized with his final attack of madness. The Regency Bill was then passed perforce; and in February 1811 George assumed the sovereign's place. By this time he had grown very fat and irritable, his health was not good and his morals were as bad as ever. He held out hopes of office to the Whigs, but he was persuaded by Lady Hertford and Mrs. Fitzherbert to continue the Tories in power. From them he hoped to get better financial terms than from their opponents and he was deeply disappointed when his income was only increased by £100,000. Accordingly he tried to play the two parties off against each other, but he soon found it best to stick to the Tories; and for the next fifteen years Lord Liverpool remained Prime Minister.

After the Battle of Waterloo the Princess of Wales went abroad; and early in the following year the young Princess Charlotte was married to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. She was delighted to escape from her father whom she detested as much as he did her, but eighteen months later she died in childbed, and George was left without a direct heir. He was now more unpopular than ever. His debts were still enormous, all his good looks had vanished, neither political party trusted him, many of his friends had left him, and his moral reputation was at its worst. He became the constant subject of caricatures in the press and on one occasion, when driving to open Parliament, his coach was stoned and he was publicly hissed by the mob. Henceforward he avoided public functions as far as possible and spent most of his time in revelry and yachting.

On January 29th 1820 the old King died, and the Prince Regent ascended the throne. He had just been at the point of dissolution himself from influenza and was unable to attend his father's funeral. But the moment he had recovered he concentrated all his energies on getting a divorce from his wife. For several years Caroline had been touring abroad with a small and dubious foreign suite, leading a life of remarkable indiscretion if not of immorality; but she now announced her intention of returning to England and taking part in the coronation. To this George was firmly opposed. He hated her, he believed that she had been misconducting herself on the Continent, and he was determined that she should never share his throne. At first he offered her a sum of £50,000 to renounce the title of Queen; but as she refused, a bill of divorce was introduced into Parliament under the auspices of the government. Public opinion however refused to tolerate a man of George's character, age and career turning off a wife to whom he had been married for a quarter of a century; several of the ministers resigned, and the bill had to be withdrawn. But George insisted on being crowned alone, and he had the ceremony performed on a phenomenal scale, his own clothes costing



nearly £80,000. During the celebration Queen Caroline drove up to Westminster Abbey, but she was turned away from the doors. A few weeks later she died, the subject of much sympathy however undeserved.

In the summer the King visited Ireland, in the autumn Hanover, and in the following summer Scotland, thus making the round of his dominions. His progresses were marked by festivities and little else. By 1823 he had become so unwieldy and so conscious of his unpopularity that he practically retired from public view. He rebuilt Buckingham Palace but passed most of his time at Windsor or Brighton, where with his doctor, Sir William Knighton, and his latest mistress, Lady Conyngham, he lived in almost complete privacy except for dinners to his friends. When he drove in Windsor Park or came up to London on official occasions every artifice was employed to mitigate his appearance and to screen him from sight; and these devices coupled with bad health gradually affected his mind. He used to talk of his personal exploits on the field of Waterloo and the course at Goodwood, and threaten to emulate his predecessors Henry VIII and Charles I. Politically his only object was to resist Catholic concessions, and with this end in view he hampered the formation of several governments. On this subject his convictions were probably genuine; yet he never had the courage to carry them through, and he thus had to accept ministers and measures with which he disagreed.

George's successive struggles with Castlereagh, Canning, and Peel undoubtedly helped to promote his delusions; but with Wellington he felt secure. He used to kiss "his dear Arthur" at audiences in his bedroom, recall their mutual military adventures in Spain or Flanders, and mimic the duke's political colleagues. Against the Catholic Relief Bill he still fought so hard that his Cabinet had to resign before he would accept it. He was now suffering from dropsy, gout and stone and was partly blind. He lived in overheated rooms at Windsor, lying in bed for days and absorbing large quantities of laudanum

and cherry brandy. By May 1830 he had become so weak that he could not sign any papers, though he retained some cheerfulness, courage and wit. At last on the night of June 25th 1830 he died at the age of sixty-seven, after having reigned ten years: he was buried in St. George's Chapel at Windsor. Being without legitimate issue he was succeeded by his next surviving brother William Duke of Clarence. There is no certain evidence of his having had any natural children, and the various tales of a Villiers, a Seymour and a Conyngham only suggest a connection which no one concerned was anxious to confirm. When he died all the coats, boots and pantaloons of fifty years were in his wardrobe, with five hundred pocket books containing small sums of money, and countless bundles of women's love letters, gloves and hair.\*

George IV in his best days was a tall, well-proportioned man with a high complexion and a dashing air. He had a sufficient knowledge of languages, a taste for music, painting and the drama, and an ability to criticise or imitate which was not unamusing: 'after plenty of iced punch and a bottle of sherry he was at his best.' With some social graces and a distinct personal attraction when he chose to exercise it, he could on occasion adopt a dignified manner.

He was rarely at a loss for conversation, and he was a successful Lothario with the female sex. He made love in so debonair, princely and romantic a manner that few could rival or resist him, though he would often sink into coarseness or excess. But he was a man of no morals, his word being equally unreliable in finance, politics or love. He lied about his marriage and his debts, he deserted his creditors and his friends, and he treated his father, his wife, his child and his mistresses with equal callousness. "He had a sort of petty royal pride and preferred the society of Wattier and Weston, his cook and his tailor, to that of his peers." Dissolute, extravagant, vain and vulgar, he rarely resisted tempta-

\* D. N. B., vii. 1082.

tion, frittering away his time among parasites. Many of his intimates were the worst specimens of their day, and of his eighteen or more mistresses few had any distinction. His two principal friends, Brummell and Hertford, had far more character and courage than their patron, and neither of them are rated high. In affairs of state George had an average intelligence, though little principle or morality. Politically he was an opportunist: for the first half of his life he was a Whig, for the second a Tory, and latterly he stood definitely for resistance to reform. In the management of his own affairs his capacity was on the lowest level. From the good qualities of Mrs. Fitzherbert he benefited little and he did much to increase the faults of Queen Caroline. Brougham calls him extravagantly selfish, weak, irritable and resentful, a creature of impulses, the victim of self-indulgence.\*

With a narrow and thrifty upbringing George had early learnt to abhor the traditions of his parents and to crave for luxury and pleasure. Encouraged by scheming friends to rebel against his father, his position lent itself to suborning politicians, borrowing money and seducing women with comparative impunity. Almost at once he reaped the whirlwind, and the nearer he got to the throne the more unsuited he became to fill it. As Prince of Wales, as Regent and as King he cut a sorry figure, for in twenty years he lost all the reputation and most of the power that his ancestors had laboriously retrieved in a century. The leader of a raffish fashion, the founder of Brighton and the Regent's Park, he was called "The first Gentleman in Europe," and he maintained a certain aplomb, geniality and bravado during the Napoleonic Wars: but as an historical character or as a serious individual he possesses hardly any claims to sympathy, interest or respect.

\* Brougham, ii. 1-4.





WILLIAM IV

From the picture by Sir M. A. Shee in the National Portrait Gallery

## WILLIAM IV

1765-1837

WILLIAM HENRY, Duke of Clarence and afterwards William IV, called the Sailor King, was born at Buckingham Palace on August 21st 1765, the third son of George III by Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. He was baptised by the Archbishop of Canterbury and when five years old was made a Knight of the Thistle. After being educated at Kew under Dr. Majendie and General Budé, a Swiss officer who had served in the Hanoverian army, he was sent at the age of twelve to H.M.S. Prince George, Admiral Digby's flagship, to be trained as a sailor. The King his father wrote to the captain "You will be pleased with the appearance of the boy who neither wants resolution nor cheerfulness. I desire he may be received with the smallest marks of parade. I trust the admiral will order him immediately on board." \*

The young prince however though rated as an able seaman, was given a few privileges. He was accompanied by his tutor, he was allowed "a small place on the ship with light sufficient for following his studies," and he was supplied with a proper outfit. He went to sea almost at once and was present at the relief of Gibraltar in 1780, being then promoted to midshipman. On his return to London he was given an ovation at Drury Lane Theatre; but as his elder brothers began to take him about the town and nearly got him arrested for brawling at Ranelagh, the King sent him back to his ship. On a later visit to London he announced that he wished to marry a Miss Fortescue, aged sixteen, for which he again had his leave curtailed.

\* D. N. B., xxi. 325.

After being made a Knight of the Garter William was posted to a succession of ships, visiting the West Indies and New York, where he met Nelson, who formed a good opinion of him. In May 1783 the *Morning Chronicle* reports that "by the accounts from Leeward Island Prince William was in great health and spirits, very much attached to Lord Hood and a favourite throughout the whole fleet. His Highness having received two or three payments of his share of prize money distributed it among the servants who attended the Admiral's cabin," where it seems he was messing. On returning to England he was sent to travel on the Continent, and for two years he moved about France and Italy "getting into many scrapes, quarrels with gamblers and entanglements with sorry women." In 1785 he was promoted lieutenant and appointed to H.M.S. *Hebe*, and ten months later he was made captain of H.M.S. *Pegasus*. In this ship he again served in the West Indies but without any great distinction, for he was a martinet, could not get on with his officers and was always falling out with his first lieutenant. Nelson, however, said that he loved him as a man and a friend and took his part vigorously, describing the *Pegasus* as "one of the best disciplined ships;" while William, on Nelson's marriage, gave away the bride and entertained the happy couple afterwards. In 1789 he was created Duke of Clarence, and after commanding two more ships, H.M.S. *Andromeda* and H.M.S. *Valiant*, as a post-captain, he was promoted rear-admiral in December of that year.

William was now twenty-four, a big, burly, redfaced Jack Tar in appearance, noisy, kindly and garrulous. He had been at sea for eleven years during which time he had learned something of his profession, though without shewing any special signs of ability. He saw no more sea service. His general prospects were not particularly promising. He was only the third of the King's seven sons, with very distant chances of the succession. The French Revolution had just begun; and his father

was not at all anxious to ask for, nor Parliament to grant, further appanages to the younger princes. Economy was the order of the day; and there was little demand in the higher ranks of the naval and military services for those who were not exceptionally competent. William was thus thrown back on the then somewhat idle and useless life of a minor royalty in a country that was becoming democratic.

In 1790 the King appointed him Ranger of Bushey Park; and about this time he started his connection with Mrs. Jordan, *née* Dorothy Bland, a popular and attractive actress whom he first met at Drury Lane. She was a young Irishwoman who had had several previous adventures and children, but she was also an extremely capable comedienne who earned several thousands a year; and as the new duke was notoriously impecunious it was said that she and not he kept the house. "Her person was large, soft and generous like her soul," and she made William a faithful mistress, lived with him for twenty years and bore him a large family. But the liaison was not advantageous from a national point of view, though its unobtrusive establishment gave little cause for scandal. The pair lived at 17 Hanover Square or at the Lodge in Bushey Park, leading a quiet, humdrum existence, and principally occupied with the cares of domestic economy. In society or politics they played little part, except when the duke attended public dinners or entertainments and made long speeches in which he delighted. Meanwhile his promotions continued. He was made a vice-admiral, an admiral, and finally in 1811 an admiral of the fleet, the only then existing example of that rank. In that year he separated from Mrs. Jordan, an allowance of £4,000 a year being settled on her and her children. Five years afterwards she died in Paris.

In June 1814 the duke commanded the British Fleet on its inspection by the allied sovereigns, flying his flag in H.M.S. *Impregnable*. Three years later the death of his niece the Princess Charlotte brought him within



measurable distance of the throne, and at his mother's request he then determined to marry. There had been some talk of a rich Miss Wickham, but the lady selected was the Princess Adelaide, eldest daughter of George, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Meiningen. In July 1818 the wedding took place quietly at Kew. William was fifty-three while his bride was twenty-five, but their union was consistently happy. They spent twelve months in Hanover and then went back to the Ranger's Lodge at Bushey. There for the next ten years they remained almost unknown; for George IV who had become King saw little of his brothers. William was now hardly regarded as a serious character: he was the fat father of a large illegitimate family, and only famous for long-winded orations at public festivals, where his speeches had occasionally some point but seldom any tact.

In 1827 the death of his elder brother the Duke of York made William heir presumptive to the crown, and his future had to be taken into account. His income was raised by Parliament to £40,000 a year, and on Canning's becoming Prime Minister he was appointed Lord High Admiral, an office that had been dormant for over a century. The post was merely meant as a compliment, the duke being intended to act as the nominal President of the Board of Admiralty; but he took it as a tribute to his naval abilities and insisted on exercising the fullest powers of control and command. He sailed about the Channel flying the Union flag at the main, he interviewed and personally promoted officers of the fleet, and he generally assumed the functions of an active Commander-in-Chief. Such an attitude was impossible under the existing conditions. First Wellington and then George IV remonstrated with him, until at last in August 1828 he resigned his place in dudgeon "as with the impediments thrown in his way he could not do justice to his King or country." \* During his year of office he had, according to Greville, only "distinguished himself by absurd speeches, morbid activity and general wildness." †

\* D. N. B., xxi. 329.

† Greville, ii. 2.

For two years William reverted to his former obscurity until the death of his brother George IV in 1830 placed him on the throne. He was then nearly sixty-five, little known to the public and with a very slight knowledge of affairs. But a certain shrewd common sense and his natural kindliness and simplicity came to his rescue. He insisted on the coronation expenses being reduced to a minimum—£30,000—and on his way to the Abbey he nodded familiarly to anyone he recognised. He looked up and befriended his old naval cronies. He gave Wellington, the Prime Minister, unlimited confidence, and by his bluff, hearty manners he acquired a specious popularity which disguised some of his faults. He also worked hard, signing thousands of state documents which his predecessor had allowed to accumulate.

Soon after his accession the Whigs under Lord Grey came into office. Their principal platform was the Reform Bill, and in supporting them William showed statesmanship and courage. He stuck loyally to his ministers and to the constitution. After refusing at first to force the Bill through the Lords by a creation of peers he gave the Tories an opportunity of forming a government; but on their inability to do so he accepted Grey's conditions and persuaded the opposition to let the Bill pass. So anxious was he to play his part properly that on one occasion he hurried off to dissolve Parliament without waiting for his escort of lifeguards, offering "to go to Westminster in a hackney coach." The Queen was less amenable: she was considered an opponent of the Bill, and on one occasion her coach was mobbed in the streets.

After Grey's retirement William shewed less flair for politics, and in 1834 he dismissed Melbourne at a moment's notice, and for no apparent reason: he was the last sovereign to exercise this right. But a Tory government under Peel only lasted a few months, and when Melbourne returned to office William got on with him better, asking him "to bring his colleagues to dinner and drink two bottles a man." His domestic life remained as simple as ever; he ate and drank a good deal, made speeches when-

ever he could, and interested himself in the establishment of his natural children. His two daughters by the Queen had died as infants, so he shewed some affection for his presumptive heiress the Princess Victoria, the child of his brother the Duke of Kent. The duchess her mother he much disliked and he once delivered himself of a long oration against her after a banquet at Windsor Castle when she was sitting by his side.

In May 1837 William became ill and after lingering for a month he died on June 20th at Windsor and was buried in St. George's Chapel. He was aged seventy-one and had reigned almost seven years. He was succeeded on the English throne by his niece the Princess Victoria and on that of Hanover by his brother the Duke of Cumberland. By Queen Adelaide who survived him twelve years he left no issue, but by Mrs. Jordan he had ten children named FitzClarence the eldest of whom he created Earl of Munster.

William IV, though his education and intelligence were limited and his outbursts at times suggested a mild insanity, had a core of good sense which shewed itself in some of his remarks and which often led him to take a sound though rough-and-ready line in politics. His experiences in the navy, in the colonies and behind the footlights had brought him into touch with a plainer class of people than princes usually met and had given him a certain sympathy with democracy; and he had a great idea of keeping his word and of acting according to the constitution. He had a moderate knowledge of the Continent and of the French and German languages, a considerable acquaintance with drama and the stage, and an untutored appreciation of art and literature which led him to collect a small library. Greville calls him "reasonable, tractable and goodnatured, but vulgar and lacking in dignity or reticence." Despite his earlier amours he was an excellent husband, domesticated to a degree; "The Queen and I are quiet folk" he used to say "she does nothing but her knotting after dinner."

In his early days William had been chiefly concerned

with the duties of his profession and with looking after his small fortune and his large family. He had to keep up a high position on a limited income and he found that the most dignified way of doing it without further degrading his rank was to live in comparative retirement. When he succeeded to the crown his habits were formed, and he was wise enough to let instinct guide him in matters of principle, leaving ways and means to his ministers. Not unlike his father in his simpler tastes, a hardier training had kept him free from the faults of his elder brothers, and though he had much less intelligence than George IV he had far more idea of truth and conduct. His natural if stupid honesty did something to diminish the contempt into which several of his relatives had dragged the throne during the preceding twenty years.

As a boy William could remember his father ruling the House of Commons and the country like an autocrat. As an old man he lived to see the tables turned and the power of the Crown reduced to a shadow of its former strength. That he was able to adapt himself to such a change without catastrophe argues a certain degree of comprehension, capacity and courage.

## VICTORIA

1819-1901

THE Princess Alexandrina Victoria was born at Kensington Palace on 24th May 1819, the only child of Edward, Duke of Kent, fourth son of George III, by Victoria, youngest daughter of Francis, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and widow of Ernest, Prince of Leiningen. Her father had served abroad as a soldier for twenty years, had travelled a good deal in Europe, and had experienced the financial straits that were common to the younger members of his family. A burly martinet of Whiggish tendencies he had an honest, methodical character, but little knowledge or ability. His wife, who had acted for some years as Regent for her son in his small German state was an agreeable, voluble woman connected with a number of princely houses and devoted to her relations.

The duke and duchess had only married in 1818 and at first they had lived in Leiningen to economise; but they came over to England for the birth of their child, who at once became the senior representative of the royal family in her generation and not far removed from the eventual succession. Her godparents were the Emperor Alexander of Russia, after whom she was named, her aunt, the Queen of Würtemberg, and her maternal grandmother the Duchess of Saxe-Coburg. She was christened and vaccinated, and after spending a short time at Claremont was taken to Sidmouth. There in January 1820 her father died of a chill; and a few days later her grandfather, George III, died also, leaving only her two uncles, the Dukes of York and Clarence, between her and the throne.



## VICTORIA

From the picture by Sir G. Hayter in the National Portrait Gallery



Victoria was brought up with great care at Kensington Palace. Her mother, who knew very little English, never left her, though she confided her education to Fräulein, afterwards Baroness Lehzen and to Dr. Davys, later Dean of Chester. The little Princess learnt to speak German, French and Italian, to sing and play, to sketch and paint, to ride and dance, and she did all with remarkable facility. She had no English relations of her own age but she saw something of her half-brother and sister, the Leiningens, and a good deal of her maternal uncle Prince Leopold, the widower of George IV's daughter the Princess Charlotte. He was a man of understanding and discretion of whom Victoria was exceptionally fond : as she grew older she used to stay with him at Claremont, and he gradually acquired considerable influence over her.

In 1826 she was taken to Windsor to visit her uncle George IV, who took her out for a drive : and in the following year she attended her first court function, a ball at St. James's Palace. Soon afterwards the Duke of York died ; and on the accession of William IV the Princess Victoria became his heir presumptive. King William liked her though not her mother whom he considered presuming ; so that there was little love lost between Kensington and Windsor. Parliament now increased the income of the Duchess of Kent by £10,000 a year, and the Princess was brought more into public notice. She travelled about England with her mother staying at various large houses and visiting places of interest. In 1835 she was confirmed, and in the following year, when she was sixteen, she met her first cousin Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg ; and it was hinted to her that he might become her future husband.

On June 20th 1837 King William died ; and at the age of eighteen Victoria became Queen of England. The crown of Hanover, which descended only in the male line, went to her uncle the Duke of Cumberland, and the whole interests of the new sovereign were thus concentrated on her British dominions. Her accession was popular ; the change from a series of imbecile, obese



or immoral old men to a fresh, alert and innocent girl arousing an extraordinary degree of loyalty and enthusiasm. Victoria was very small and of little beauty, with fair hair, blue eyes and prominent teeth, but she had a masterful and penetrating expression, she held herself well, she had a sufficiency of accomplishments, and her manners were graceful and dignified.

She soon freed herself from her mother's tutelage; though Fräulein Lehzen always remained her friend, as did Baron Stockmar, the erstwhile secretary of Prince Leopold who had now become King of the Belgians. But her closest intimate was her Prime Minister Lord Melbourne, a man of wide sensibility, talent and humanity who had seen the best of everything for half a century and who readily imparted his experience and counsel to his young mistress. By him and by the Duke of Wellington, the traditional pillar of the state, her early conduct was guided, and under their political teaching her character was formed.

At her coronation Victoria's ingenuous bearing captivated the spectators and enhanced her reputation. A year later the Whigs resigned, much to her regret, and Sir Robert Peel was called on to form a Cabinet. One of his first requests was that the ladies of the bed-chamber should belong to the governing party—to have the wives of his rivals at the Queen's ear would be, he said, too difficult. But to this Victoria objected so insistently that the Whigs had to return to office in a minority. It was the first indication of her will.

In all that she did the young Queen was active and interested, reading and signing despatches, interviewing her ministers, riding, dancing and driving with her court, and entertaining her numerous guests. She kept up her education diligently and now made her first acquaintance with novels—Lytton, Cooper and Scott; while she paid attention to music and the theatre.

She knew that she must marry and at her uncle Leopold's suggestion she chose her cousin Albert, a younger son of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. In October 1839 she

proposed the alliance to him. "It was a nervous thing to do" she said, "but her dignity compelled it." Prince Albert was just her own age, a man of character, culture and piety; and his abilities made him an invaluable if rather too influential a companion. But the announcement was not widely welcomed in England; for exception was taken to the Prince's relatively low rank, to his Catholic connections and to his German birth, while there was some question about his future precedence and income. To solve this he was created a Royal Highness and assigned a separate revenue of £30,000 a year. The marriage took place at St. James's Palace on February 10th 1840; and for twenty years it was a union of ideal happiness. The Queen relied on her husband absolutely and was largely governed by his advice, though his uncertain standing in the country and his lack of English training at times made the position delicate. But he acted with remarkable tact and his wife always shewed him unfailing loyalty.

Lord Melbourne was now replaced as Prime Minister by Sir Robert Peel. The Queen regretted losing her early mentor and did not much care for his successor, but she accommodated herself to the new conditions. In November 1841 her eldest son was born, afterwards King Edward VII, and a large family followed.

Victoria soon made it clear that she intended to be more than a sovereign in name. In foreign affairs she was particularly exacting. Her connections and correspondence with Continental royal houses made her knowledge of value, and she always insisted on seeing drafts of the despatches before they were sent abroad. Some Foreign Secretaries followed her instructions but others did not; and in consequence there were often dissensions between the Cabinet and the Palace. The chief offender was Palmerston, and in him the Queen gradually lost confidence. By Peel and Aberdeen she was more humoured, but after Melbourne's retirement her sympathies tended towards the Tories.

In 1842 Victoria paid a visit to Scotland, and in the

following years to France, Belgium and Germany, staying with her kinsman Louis Philippe, her uncle King Leopold and her cousin the King of Prussia. Some difficulties were made about Prince Albert's position but otherwise the visits were an unqualified success.

During the repeal of the corn laws the Queen took a strong and courageous line; but when on Peel's defeat Lord John Russell became Prime Minister the arrival of Palmerston at the Foreign Office caused her trouble. On the main questions of policy a certain accord was maintained between sovereign and minister, but on matters of form there was continual bickering. Palmerston carried on his duties as he thought best; while Prince Albert stood up for the rights of the Crown, was present at audiences, held levees in the Queen's name, and seemed to share with her the rule of the British dominions.

Serious and strenuous, caring more for study than for sport, the Prince devoted himself with all the energy of a proselyte to English politics and education. But his foreign origin and manners hampered him, and by many people he was viewed with dislike or suspicion. His wife meanwhile was immersed in the domestic care of a young and increasing family, riding, dancing or yachting, with her hands full of the daily business of government. The royal couple led a full and varied life, moving about the country, entertaining their numerous relations, interesting themselves in art, music, industry and science as well as in the affairs of State. The Queen had purchased Osborne in the Isle of Wight and had leased Balmoral in the Highlands, and in 1849 she paid her first visit to Ireland where she received an "idolatrous reception." Two years later the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, largely due to the design and organisation of Prince Albert, gave the Crown an additional access of popularity. Its state opening Victoria described as "the proudest and happiest day of her life" for it publicly justified to her people the merits of her husband.

Departmental difficulties with Palmerston had gradually

brought her into conflict with the Cabinet; and over the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon the Foreign Minister was forced to resign. It was a doubtful triumph for the Queen. Soon afterwards the government fell on Palmerston's attack; and for a few months a Conservative ministry under Derby came into office: it was at this time that the Queen first made the acquaintance of Disraeli, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Aberdeen then formed a Coalition government; and in 1854, over some disputes in Syria, the Crimean War began, England, France and Turkey against Russia. The country had not been at war on a large scale for forty years, and the management of the campaign caused universal dissatisfaction. Aberdeen had to resign, and the Queen after sounding several other leaders was forced to turn to Palmerston. She much disliked it but she behaved with courtesy and tact; and Palmerston with a strong Cabinet brought the war to a satisfactory conclusion. During its progress Victoria had been to Paris as the guest of the Emperor Napoleon and had also consented to a marriage between her eldest daughter and the Crown Prince of Prussia. These royal visits and dynastic alliances were events of importance in the then state of European politics; and the share taken in them by the Crown increased its already considerable influence.

Almost immediately the Indian Mutiny followed. Victoria displayed pluck and tenacity throughout its course, and humanity and toleration after its suppression. Her greatest wish, she said, was to see the Indian peoples flourishing and contented: in voicing this concern for their welfare she struck a new note.

During the next few years she again visited France, Belgium and Germany, taking special interest in her stay in Hanover. For a short time Palmerston had been replaced by Derby, but when he returned to office matters went more smoothly, for Victoria had learned his value. She had recently given her husband the title of Prince Consort with a special precedence, for she delighted to

honour him. His unselfish qualities and his high standards were now more appreciated by the public, though his policy was still considered reactionary.

In March 1861 Victoria lost her mother; and in December of the same year the Prince Consort succumbed to an attack of influenza and typhoid fever at Windsor. His untimely death left the Queen inconsolable and changed the whole tenour of her life. From being a busy woman moving in the centre of affairs she now became a bereaved widow living in almost oriental retirement. One of the first effects of the Prince's death was that the Queen relied much more than heretofore on her personal attendants; her successive private secretaries, Grey, Phipps, Biddulph and Ponsonby, and her ladies in waiting Lady Augusta Bruce, Lady Ely and Lady Churchill, becoming her closest companions and advisers. After a long mourning and after many requests from her ministers and the press she at length resumed her interests, determined to discharge her duty to her people: but her life of romance had become one of tragedy and her early brightness had changed to a lasting desolation.

In 1863, after completing his education and travelling in America and the East, the Prince of Wales married the Princess Alexandra, daughter of King Christian IX of Denmark; and under their auspices the court renewed something of its former gaiety. In that year the Queen again went to Coburg and met the King of Prussia and the Emperor Francis Joseph. Baron Stockmar had just died; and in 1865 she lost two more of her old counsellors, Palmerston and King Leopold. She still remained much in seclusion, and there was a constant criticism of her absence from public ceremonies. The only exceptions she made were to unveil statues of the Prince Consort, which soon, in Gladstone's words, "covered the land." Not until 1868 did she formally emerge from retirement, holding a drawing-room, attending a review and visiting Switzerland.

After three short governments of Russell, Derby and

Disraeli, Gladstone became Prime Minister. Victoria approved neither of him nor of his politics, but she gave him reasonable support and helped him in passing a bill for disestablishing the Irish Church. During the Franco-German War her sympathies were with the Germans, though her dislike of Napoleon's policy did not prevent her according him hospitality in England after his defeat at Sedan. During these years she considerably extended her interests and began to meet literary people. In earlier days she had known Macaulay, who had remarked on her intimate knowledge of Germany, and she had long been friendly with Tennyson. She now made the acquaintance of Carlyle, Browning and Dickens, whose novels she much admired. The fact that Disraeli was also an author increased her belief in him; and she gradually came to consider him the greatest man in England.

In 1870 the Queen was compelled to relinquish her direct control of the army by defining the duties of Commander in Chief and placing him under the Secretary of State for War, and she subsequently consented to exercise her prerogative in abolishing the purchase of commissions, after the House of Lords had thrown out a bill for that purpose. Four years later Disraeli became Premier and in 1876 he passed a measure giving the Queen the title of Empress of India, a distinction in which she gloried. She was in thorough sympathy with Disraeli's politics and personality and she enjoyed his society more than that of any minister since Melbourne. She used to visit him at his house in Buckinghamshire, gave him an earldom and the Garter, and after the Berlin Conference pressed him to accept a dukedom. When he died in 1881 she lost as great a friend as her nature and her position allowed.

The return of Gladstone to power was followed by a war in Egypt, where the disaster of General Gordon's death in the Sudan affected Victoria deeply. She regarded it as the fault of her ministers and said that it had left a stain upon England. The policy of Home Rule

for Ireland she also deprecated, as being a concession to disorder, and she was glad to see it defeated. Lord Salisbury then became Prime Minister, and to him she gladly gave her confidence as an old pupil of Disraeli's and a sensible Foreign Secretary.

In 1887 the Queen celebrated her first Jubilee. In March she spent ten consecutive days in London, a very rare occurrence: she took part in several public ceremonies, and on June 21st she went in procession to a thanksgiving service at Westminster Abbey, thirty of her sons, sons-in-law and grandsons riding before her. Addresses of congratulation from numerous sources, military and naval reviews on a large scale, and the foundation of a Nurses' Institute with funds which had been presented to her by the women of England were features of the celebration. The various pageants and popular assemblies gave rise to genuine and world-wide demonstrations of loyalty which were of undoubted value both to the Empire and the Crown.

In the following year Victoria visited Italy, Austria and Germany, where she met Prince Bismarck, and in 1889 she went for a holiday to Biarritz and San Sebastian in Spain. At this time she had some difficulties with Parliament over the grant of incomes to her grandchildren, but eventually with the assistance of Gladstone, who was leader of the opposition, the measures were passed. Her living descendants had now become so numerous that she had links and interests in nearly every court in Europe. With all of them she was in constant touch, and her knowledge of the more intimate matters on the Continent made her a real factor in foreign policy.

In 1892 Gladstone became Prime Minister for the fourth time, but after another defeat on his Home Rule Bill he resigned; and the Queen of her own motion then selected Lord Rosebery to replace him. Fifteen months later the Liberal government fell, and for the remainder of the reign Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister. During these years the Prince of Wales replaced his

mother in many of her ceremonial duties, gradually acquiring that knowledge and judgment of affairs which so distinguished him when he came to the throne. The Queen however did not relinquish any of her attention to matters of state over which she still exercised a meticulous control.

In 1897 Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee, having worn the crown longer than any of her predecessors or than any living sovereign. It was made the occasion of a British demonstration even greater than that ten years earlier, envoys from the overseas dominions and from nearly every country of the world attending it. A procession from Buckingham Palace to St. Paul's and along the south of the Thames, illuminations all over the kingdom, and a succession of grandiose receptions and military and naval displays combined to make it a genuinely Imperial event. Millions of her subjects greeted the Queen, and she thanked them with her blessings. She was still alert and capable though nearly eighty years of age, and on this occasion she was the definite centre of a universal triumph of the British race, the apotheosis of the vast advance in civilisation, colonisation and commerce which had been made during her reign.

A year later the Sudan was recaptured by Lord Kitchener; and shortly afterwards the South African War broke out. Its early disasters and its long struggles were followed by the Queen with anxiety and distress: but once embarked on it she concentrated her spirit and energy on its victorious conclusion. She was constantly engaged in inspecting troops for the front and visiting those who had been invalided. She also went over to Dublin to shew her appreciation of the Irish regiments and attended various ceremonies in Ireland. In the winter of 1900 she returned to Osborne. She was suffering from rheumatism and failing sight though not otherwise ill. But the anxieties of the war and the strain of age and work now told rapidly on her. She was able to receive Lord Roberts on his return from



South Africa, and on January 10th she saw Mr. Chamberlain; but a few days later extreme physical prostration set in; and on January 22nd 1901 she died at the age of eighty-one, having reigned sixty-three years. She was buried at the Frogmore Mausoleum in Windsor Park beside the Prince Consort. She had had nine children, of whom seven survived her, forty grandchildren and as many great-grandchildren, her descendants born in her lifetime totalling nearly a hundred. They included King Edward VII, who succeeded her, the German Emperor William II, the Empress of Russia, and the Queens of Greece, Norway, Roumania and Spain; while her collateral relationships connected her with the royal houses of France, Portugal, Belgium, Denmark and Sweden. With some reason she was thus called the grandmother of Europe, so widely had the Coburgs extended their blood.

Queen Victoria had few personal advantages, but her attainments were practical and her character was strong. With several modern languages she was thoroughly conversant, she had a sufficient knowledge of history, and she understood the music of her own times, Rossini, Mendelssohn, Sullivan and Gounod. In literature and art her tastes, according to modern canons, were limited; while in dress and decoration she adhered to the standard now bearing her name. A vigorous, healthy woman, devoted to fresh air and active exercise, her mind was as energetic as her body. She was always at work on the business of the state, her family or her household, brisk, vivacious and never remiss. She was also full of pluck. Between 1842 and 1849 three successive attempts were made on her life, all on Constitution Hill and all by lunatics. At none did she show the least signs of fear.

Her memory and sense of dignity saved her from many mistakes, while her courage and interest in her people gave her the firmness which her sex might have lacked. Within its bounds her intelligence was logical and clear, and her will often carried her through difficulties and made her ministers modify their views. Her own

were definite enough, hard to alter and frequently tinged with a reactionary or foreign bias. Yet she sometimes admitted her errors, as in the Bedchamber incident and her estimate of Louis Napoleon. In her conduct of business she was strictly constitutional. "She always insisted on knowing what was being done and she compared it to what had been done in the past; if she disagreed, she protested; if the Minister still adhered to his decision, she gave way." \* As a result she left the Crown firmer and much more popular than she had found it.

Victoria has been accused of too German an outlook, but it must be remembered that she had never known her father and that her two predecessors on the throne had little claim to her respect. On the other hand her mother, sister, uncle, husband, private secretary and governess, all of whom she loved and revered, were pure-blooded Germans: her descent and her language were German; and for the princes and politics of that country she had a close understanding and sympathy. Yet when there was any question of British interests no other element counted; and she knew how to identify herself with the feelings and needs of her people. She had a strong feminine instinct, she always recognised the appeal of poverty, misfortune or suffering, and she set an example of behaviour, charity and consideration which definitely influenced her epoch. Her ideas of morality were rigid, a salutary change from those of many of her ancestors; and her court was marked by an almost Puritan temperance and restraint. Thus she disliked Queen Elizabeth for her amours, she sympathised with the Stuarts for their misfortunes, and she told Lord Melbourne that "men sitting so long after dinner was a horrid custom." †

Her religion was strictly Anglican and orthodox, she was devout and regular in her worship, and she paid the closest attention to ecclesiastical patronage which as far as possible she exercised herself, for she regarded

\* Trevelyan, 691.

† Strachey, 70.

the Church, the services and foreign affairs as her own particular province. With her intimates and her guests she had a pleasant manner, but she never tolerated any suggestion of familiarity or lightness. At humour of a simple sort she could laugh without restraint: but those she despised or disliked she would freeze. She had plenty of sentiment and some sentimentality, to which she gave rein in her diaries, her letters and her Leaves from a Highland Journal.

Gradually outliving all her contemporaries Victoria became in course of time such a Nestor in experience and recollection that her ministers and brother sovereigns often chose to submit rather than to contradict her. She grew to be a law to herself, and this position, combined with a self-imposed isolation of nearly thirty years, led her to practices not really calculated to strengthen the position of the Crown. She continually went abroad without appointing a Council of Regency, she immured herself for months together in Scotland, and for years she almost ignored the capital. She did not hesitate to mark her predilections for particular statesmen and their policies, and though she usually acted as a constitutional sovereign, her friendship for Melbourne and Disraeli sometimes led her to shew a slight preference for Whigs and Conservatives as against Tories and Radicals. Yet her sound instinct for national needs and her straightforward sympathy guided her better than more erudite theories, for despite the fact that she had lived across three generations she had in the main a wonderfully adaptable outlook and comprehension. Though she had never seen a railway ticket she had travelled over most of Europe, and though she had never heard a debate she had moulded many Parliamentary measures.

Queen Victoria had the longest life and the longest reign of any English sovereign; her dominions were larger and her subjects more numerous than those of any other living prince, yet she was comparatively little known. She has not been dead thirty years, but it is probable that not thirty people now alive knew her really well.

One of the most autocratic of modern rulers, obstinately insistent on her rights in an increasingly democratic age and completely ignoring popular arts, she became the most venerated monarch in the world, the exemplar of an age of wealth, domesticity and success, the keystone of her own kingdom, the cynosure of others.

## CONCLUSION

From the accession of William the Conqueror to the death of Victoria is a period of eight hundred and thirty-five years and of twenty-five generations. During that time thirty-one Kings and five Queens have been sovereigns of England. They were divided into five dynasties, the first Norman, the second French, the third Welsh, the fourth Scottish and the fifth German. Each of these dynasties was brought in by a prince from outside England, each transmitted its blood to the next and each ended in a woman.

The Normans or Northmen drew their origin from a Danish pagan pirate who settled in France early in the tenth century. William the Conqueror was his descendant in the fifth degree, and two generations later his male line became extinct, Stephen being a Norman only through his mother. This dynasty of four Kings lasted eighty-eight years, and its heiress was the mother of the first Plantagenet.

The three real Normans were dominant personalities, strong, healthy and able, builders on a large scale, caring more for the law than the Church, determined to control their barons. They usually lived at Westminster, Winchester, Gloucester or Windsor, and they were all great hunters and fighters. Acquisitive, energetic and careful of money, their policy was to keep a firm hold both on Normandy and England. In the main they succeeded and they laid the foundations of a system of government which has lasted to the present day.

The Angevins or Plantagenets, who were not so called before the fourteenth century, took their name from

the sprig of broom, *planta genista*, which was their badge. Their arms were the lions of Aquitaine to which they added later the French fleurs de lys, and their colours were red and white. Enemies of the Normans they were the hereditary lords of Anjou and Touraine, their ancestor being a count of Gatinais in the tenth century. Henry II was his descendant in the fourth degree, and his male line continued for another ten generations to 1513; while an illegitimate branch still exists in the person of the Duke of Beaufort who is twenty-ninth in male descent from the founder of his house.

The fourteen Plantagenet Kings reigned in England for three hundred and thirty-one years, when their heiress married the first Tudor. They were a wonderfully young race, their average ages at accession, marriage and death being only twenty, twenty-two and forty-four respectively; six of them were killed in battle or murdered. Strong and generally good looking they were nervous and active, with occasional tendencies to weakness of mind or body, but nearly all were men of pronounced character. Hunters and fighters, though not to the same extent as their predecessors, they were magnificent princes, prodigal spenders of money and continually in want of it. Four of them were great builders, several had some taste for learning or the arts, while the three Lancastrians were deeply religious. They lived at Westminster, the Tower, Eltham, Shene and Windsor; the Lancastrians preferring the last-named place and the Yorkists London. The first four Plantagenets were French in sympathy and policy; but from Edward I onwards their interests lay in England; and despite their victories and losses in France they carried England and its early constitution successfully through the Middle Ages.

The Tudors, a name meaning God's Gift, descended from a Welsh squire in the fourteenth century who was said to trace his origin to Cadwallader. He married Katherine of Valois, widow of Henry V; his son

married the last Lancastrian heiress; and his grandson became Henry VII. By 1553 his male line was extinct. The Tudor arms were those of the Plantagenets; their colours were white and green, and their badge was a red and white rose.

The five Tudors, three Kings and two Queens, reigned for one hundred and eighteen years. So unprolific were they that the succession then went to James VI of Scotland, a great-great-grandson of Henry VII through two women. Except for Elizabeth the family had poor health, their average length of life being only forty-seven. They hunted, tilted, shot and played games, while Henry VII and Henry VIII occasionally fought in battle. All were highly educated and full of intelligence, and one or two had some taste for the arts: but though devoted to splendour and ceremonial they were as a rule personally parsimonious. Their favourite palaces were Richmond, Greenwich, Windsor and Whitehall: three of them never left England.

Proud, autocratic and determined the Tudors were a race of strong and efficient rulers. They were thoroughly English in sentiment and character, they developed a real spirit of nationality in the people, and they laid the foundations of the British Empire.

The Stuarts derive from a Norman follower of Henry I who settled in Scotland in the eleventh century and became High Steward of that country, whence their name. Their male lineage continued through the Earls of Lennox to James I and the Cardinal of York, this branch becoming extinct in 1807 after having lasted for twenty generations. From Charles II and James II several illegitimate lines descend of which the Duke of Buccleuch's is the senior. The Earls of Galloway represent the parent stem.

The Stuarts, five Kings and two Queens, reigned for a hundred and eleven years, eleven of these being in exile. Then, owing to Parliament's exclusion of Catholics, Anne was succeeded by her second cousin George I, a great-grandson of James I through the female line:

William III was only a Stuart through his mother. The Stuarts' arms quartered the bearings of their three kingdoms, their livery was red and gold, and their badge was the Scottish thistle.

The average length of life of this family was fifty-two; they were not remarkable for strength or good looks. They hunted, raced and played games; all the Kings except James I fought in battle; while the earlier Stuarts were well educated, several of them taking a real interest in arts, music and mechanics. They lived at Greenwich, Whitehall, St. James's, Kensington and Hampton Court: James I was the last King who made progresses about the country.

As a race the Stuarts were careful of money. All of them were able and nearly all were industrious, but they lacked judgment. In character they were irresolute, scheming and tyrannical, always anxious to defeat or dispense with their Parliaments, while several had strong tendencies to Catholicism. From them the English people learnt the benefits of the reformed religion, representative government and self-determination.

The Hanoverians descend from Welf of Bavaria, a German marcher lord of the tenth century who was connected with the Estes of Ferrara. Through various Dukes of Saxony, Brunswick and Hanover his male line continued to George I. George III's fifth son, Duke of Cumberland and King of Hanover, was great grandfather of the present Duke of Brunswick, who represents a house which has lasted for nine centuries and twenty-six generations. In England the dynasty reigned for a hundred and eighty-seven years. The succession then passed from Queen Victoria to her son King Edward VII who brought in the family of Coburg later named Windsor.

The arms of the Hanoverians were those of their predecessors with their own coat added, until 1801 when the French quartering was discarded: their colours were red, and their badge was the white horse of Saxony.



The Hanoverians were a strong, long-lived race, dying at the average of seventy-four and reigning on an average thirty-one years apiece. They were neither scholars, builders, sportsmen nor patrons of art; but George I and George II were good soldiers in the field. They lived at St. James's, Hampton Court, Kew, Buckingham House, Windsor and Balmoral, while the earlier Kings, who were thoroughly German in sentiment, frequently visited their possessions abroad. Except for George III and Victoria they took comparatively little interest in the business of state, but most of them were honest, methodical and exact; and they usually adhered to the constitutional system which had placed them on the throne. Their era, by a happy combination of capacity and circumstance, saw the small and scattered dependencies of the British crown transformed into a world-wide dominion, and the descendants of a petty German Elector raised to the rule of an Empire.

Of the Saxon, Norman, Plantagenet, Tudor and Stuart dynasties no legitimate male lineage remains so far as is known; but His present Majesty King George V is descended through females from the founder of each successive house, from Egbert, William the Conqueror, Henry II, Henry VII, James I and George I; and he unites in his veins the blood of twenty-four of his predecessors who have worn the crown of England. No other monarch in Europe enjoys so long, so varied or so distinguished a descent.

Taking the thirty-six Kings and Queens together their average length of reign has been twenty-three years and their average life fifty-two years: these figures tending to become higher as the centuries advance. Four reigned for over fifty, and ten for under ten years apiece, while two lived to past eighty and two died under sixteen. Eight met with a violent death before they were fifty, and eight others died in mental misery. Ten were usurpers, seven were deposed and of the first thirty-one sovereigns only eighteen were the real heirs to the crown.

Twelve had an English father and mother, and twenty-two spoke English as their natural language. Edward IV was the first King whose grandparents were all English: Charles II had no English grandparents: George III had not had an ancestor born in England for nine generations. Only three had known their paternal grandfathers who had reigned before them—Richard II, Henry IV and George III. Two never saw their immediate predecessors:—James I and George I. In the year 1685 seven present and future sovereigns were living; while during the ninety years from 1470 to 1560 nine wore the crown. All except Edward V and VI, Mary I and Elizabeth, had been to the Continent, many very often, while six were considerable travellers. William IV alone crossed the Atlantic. Excepting Edward V and VI and James I every King up to and including George II fought in battle.

The twenty-nine Kings who married had thirty-nine wives between them: thirteen of these were English, eleven French and six German. The four Queens who married all took foreigners for their husbands. Those Kings whose wives predeceased them generally became harder in character after their wives' deaths. Eight sovereigns can be said to have been happy in their marriages, and six to have been unhappy with their children; this latter misfortune being both a Plantagenet and a Hanoverian tradition. Twenty-six sovereigns had legitimate issue; but only in twenty-one cases did their children survive them. Their alliances connected them with most of the Continental royal houses except those professing the Orthodox faith, and for a hundred and fifty years after the Reformation the English Kings went on marrying Catholics. Six Kings or future Kings married their subjects, in nearly every instance with unfortunate results for the Queens or their relatives. Fifteen Kings are known to have had mistresses, most of whom had issue; from these ladies more than a dozen noble families derive.

The Kings usually lived near London. None of their

ordinary places of residence was more than a day's journey from the metropolis, and nearly all were situated on the banks of or adjacent to the river Thames : Greenwich, Eltham, the Tower, Westminster, Whitehall, St. James's, Shene, Richmond, Hampton Court and Windsor all stand close to that waterway. Amenity was not the only factor in their choice : policy also played a part. In the provinces they had no great feudatories to fear as had the Kings of France ; for the territorial earls had disappeared with the Conquest. London on the other hand counted immensely in their position. Parliament, trade, finance, ships and trainbands all had their home there ; and the voice of the city often determined the fate of the throne. At least twelve Kings owed their accession, deposition or restoration to the attitude of the Londoners ; and it was thus of the first importance that the court should be in touch with or in control of the capital. The official palace of the Normans and Plantagenets was at Westminster, a square roughly contained between the present Houses of Parliament and the Abbey. The King's own apartments looked on to the river where the Lords' Library now stands. After the Palace of Westminster had been largely destroyed by fire at the beginning of the sixteenth century Henry VIII occupied Whitehall : and after Whitehall was burnt in the time of William of Orange the court moved to St. James's, and in 1762 to Buckingham Palace. The country residences changed with individual taste and the diminishing opportunities for sport, but Windsor always kept its place. The Stuarts sometimes went to Scotland and the Georges to Hanover ; but Wales or Ireland was rarely visited for pleasure.

Twelve sovereigns were specially interested in art or distinguished in learning, seven were great builders, nine were definitely religious. Nineteen were professional soldiers, and two of these, besides William IV, were trained sailors. Those with artistic or sedentary tastes seldom succeeded in statecraft ; the weakest went to the wall. The sixteenth century, when the Kings were both rich and highly accomplished, coincided with a great

increase in the royal power. Of the ten Kings who were remarkable for their good looks and of the eleven who married French wives nearly all were dogged by disaster. The royal favourites were equally luckless, true types of the *graves principum amicitiae*. Flambard, Roger, Becket, de Burgh, Gaveston, two Despencers, Oxford, two Suffolks, Warwick, Buckingham, Wolsey, More, Cromwell, Somerset, Cranmer, Essex, another Somerset, another Buckingham, Strafford, Laud, Clarendon, Bolingbroke, another Oxford, Bute and Brummell: all were at one time or another the friends and close companions of Kings and all met with untimely death or unforeseen disgrace. Leicester is a solitary example of survival and success.

The Kings were as a rule religious, but they were rarely priest-ridden and they frequently rebelled against Rome. From the Conquest to the Revolution fourteen archbishops were tried, deposed, exiled, beheaded or murdered, often with the approval of their sovereigns.

With the people the monarch was always a real figure, and when his personality bulked large he often had a nickname. The Bastard, Beauclerk, Curtmantle, Cœur de Lion, Lackland, Longshanks, Crookback, Bluff King Hal, Good Queen Bess, Old Rowley and Farmer George all indicate an accepted and definite character.

Such are the main facts in the lives of the English Kings. All sprung from the same stock, inhabiting the same houses, pursuing similar pleasures, discharging in effect the same duty, that of keeping the government in motion, it might be thought that some common traits of character or conduct would mark their careers. But in fact few such features emerge. Nature seems to have been too strong for education, environment or example, and each prince eludes the expected pattern and strikes his own personal note; *notre volonté c'est le destin*.

The earlier times were naturally the more exciting, for then life and fortune were at daily hazard. The Normans seem distant, the Hanoverians dull, but the Plantagenets, the Tudors and the Stuarts glow with

tragedy, splendour or romance. In the six centuries from 1050 to 1650 nine out of twenty-seven Kings, or one in every three, were killed. When that risk was eliminated the importance of, and perhaps the interest in, the sovereign sank. Good Kings were kept on the throne by the consent of their people, evil ones by tradition, a sentiment so strong in England that even in the days of democracy it may hardly be diminished. Seven centuries ago reformers said 'We do not wish the laws of England to be changed' and though facts and forces have been modified the system and the similitude still remain.

Power and popularity were probably the two possessions which a King coveted most; but these were rarely held together: Edward III, Henry V, Edward IV and Elizabeth appear to be the only instances. There were various roads to power, nearly all dangerous, but to popularity there was no certain key. Neither riches, morality nor military renown ensured it; their opposites had often more effect. William I, Henry VII and William III were never liked; while Stephen and Charles II always kept their subjects' love: even the six Kings who engaged in civil war do not seem to have forfeited the esteem of their people. Physical bravery and a certain royal magnificence in living seem to have been the only qualities in which all or nearly all the sovereigns shared, and these were natural to their position. Yet each in his own time, though perhaps unwittingly, helped to direct, restrain or display something of the spirit of his age. Individualists in the exercise of their office they were servants of fate in the progress of their people.

Lord Halifax, who had studied courts and worked for Kings and who mainly made the Glorious Revolution, knew well the handicaps of a crown. 'A prince' he says 'who will not undergo the difficulty of understanding must undergo the danger of trusting; men are so unwilling to displease a prince that it is as dangerous to inform him right as to serve him wrong. If he loseth his people he can never regain them.'

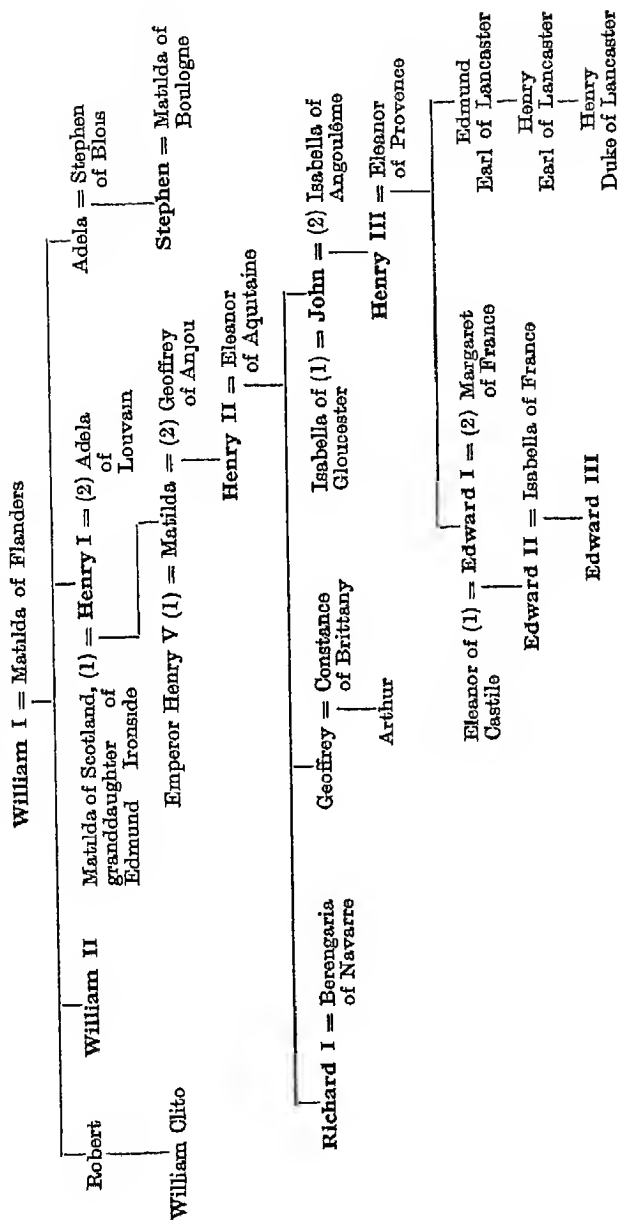
Among the Kings of England the talent that brought

them the best return was undoubtedly that of judgment. Some Kings had ability, some had industry, some had principle, but not the presence, nor the absence nor the combination of these qualities ever weighed so much in the scales of success as judgment, the Olympian art of making the right decision at the right moment; and that was a gift given only by the Gods.

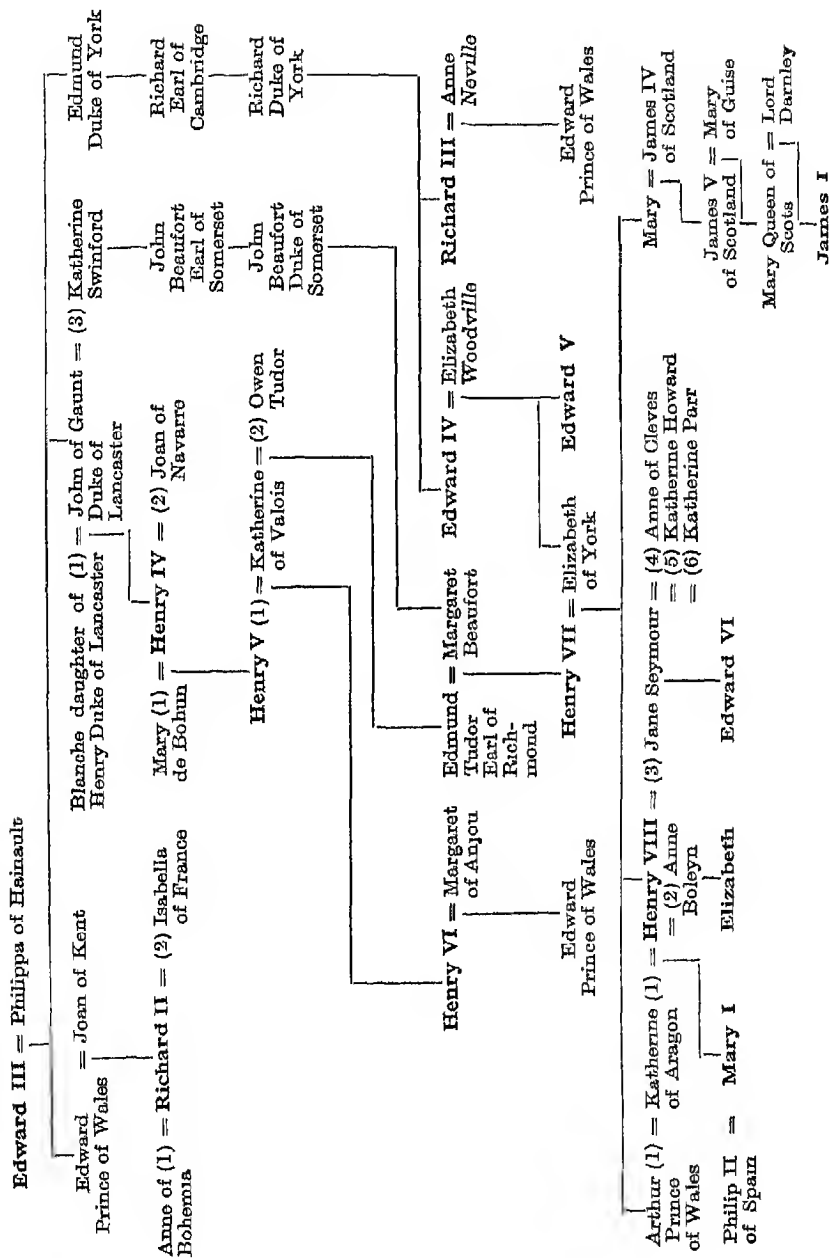
*Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovis  
Cuncta supercilio moventis.*



# GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS OF ENGLAND

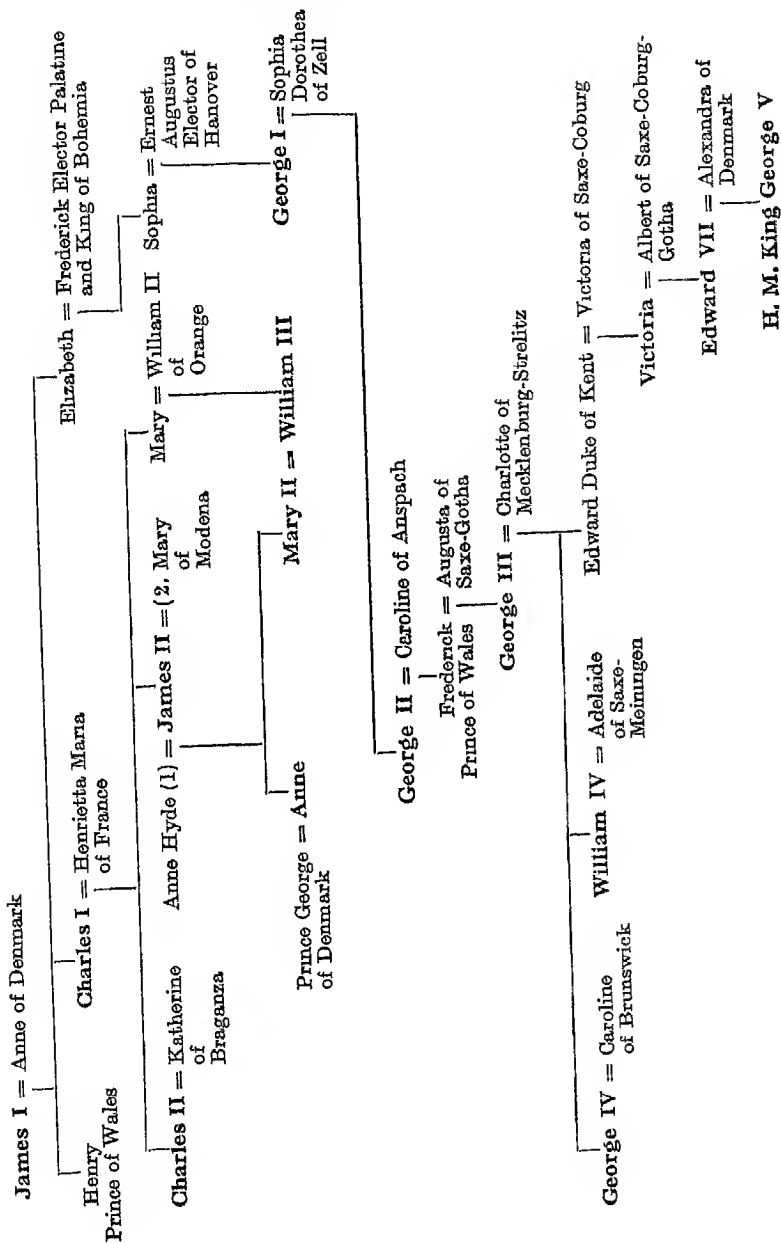






# GENEALOGICAL TABLE

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